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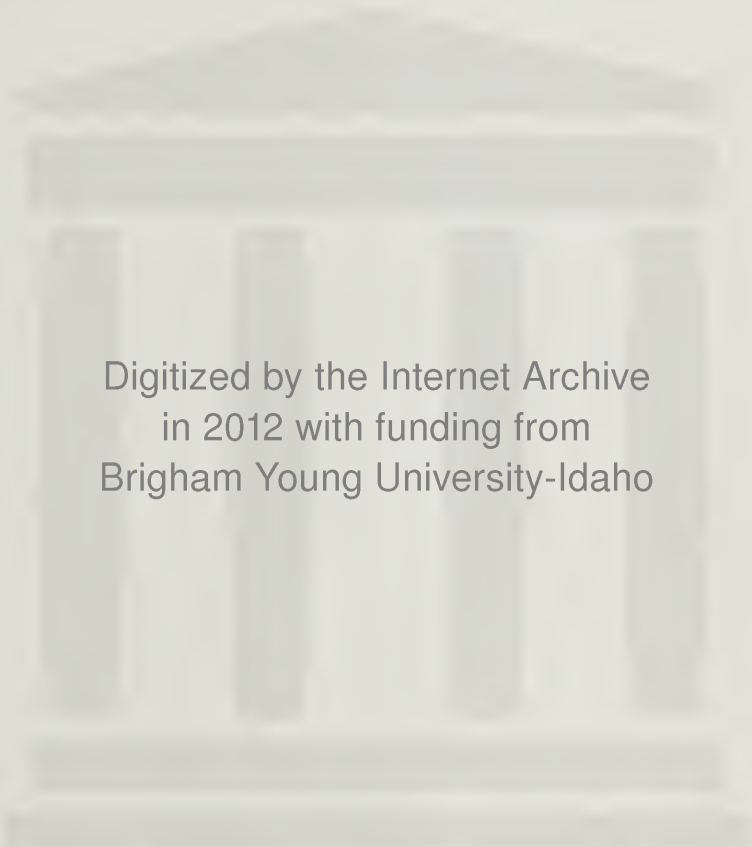
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Catharine II.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

COURT AND REIGN

OF

CATHERINE THE SECOND,

Empress of Russia;

WITH

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE ROMANOFF DYNASTY·

EMBRACING THE

REIGN OF NICHOLAS FALL OF SEVASTOPOL, ETC.

BY SAMUEL M. SCHMUCKER, A. M.

PHILADELPHI

PORTER & CC ES.

1819

TO

HON. ROBERT T. CONRAD,

OF PHILADELPHIA.

Dear Sir:—To a man of genius and of varied accomplishments, like yourself, the achievements of the master spirits of all ages, are an attractive and interesting study. Permit me, then, to inscribe the following pages to you; with the hope, that however imperfect the execution of the work may be, the intrinsic interest of the theme may make amends for it.

Your obedient servant,

SAM'L M. SMUCKER.

Philadelphia, Oct. 20, 1855.

FEB 6 '52

PREFACE.

It is universally acknowledged, by those acquainted with her history, that the Empress Catherine II. was one of the most remarkable women that ever lived. The annals of her Life and Reign are crowded with striking incidents, with novel adventures, with wonderful displays of talent, heroism, and passion; and yet, there exists no work in our language of an accessible form, in which they may be found. Under these circumstances the author of this work supposed that a useful niche remained unfilled in the historical literature of the day, which might be appropriated to advantage.

In narrating the life and career of this extraordinary woman, it was impossible to refrain from entering into some details, which, while they do not themselves in any way offend the most rigid modesty, yet describe

events and incidents which are inconsistent with pure morality. The fault of this peculiarity of the work, if fault it be, does not rest with the historian, who must present a faithful picture of the darker, as well as of the brighter, aspects of his heroine's life. It results alone from the nature of the subject discussed.

The sources from which the following pages have been prepared, are the most valuable and authentic works in European literature which treat of this subject. In the present publication, everything connected with both the public and private life of Catherine II., the truthfulness of which could be relied upon, has been introduced. Nothing of value, which appertains to the history of herself, and of her reign, has been overlooked. It had been easy for the author to introduce much gross and indelicate scandal, such as is to be found in some French works upon the subject; but as this work pretends to be an authentic and reliable history, such details were necessarily excluded. A rigid adherence to facts has been retained throughout; nor has the colouring of fancy been allowed, in any one instance, to pervert the text from the simple truth, for the purpose of presenting either a more attractive, or a more startling picture.

There are certain particular reasons which strongly

commend the history of Catherine II. to the attention of the reading public, which are applicable to no other case. Her history is highly instructive in one sense, while it is equally dangerous in another. It is instructive, because the theme, the heroine, was a woman of extraordinary genius; an historic meteor, the splendour of whose glittering transit across the political heavens struck every beholder with awe and wonder. No one can peruse that portion of her life without instruction, pleasure, and profit. On the other hand, this empress was beyond all question, one of the most corrupt, sensual, and licentious of women. There was no depth or excess of impurity which she had not fathomed and exhausted. The life of such a living embodiment of passion must be injurious in its effects upon the reader, unless the narrative is conducted with great prudence and discretion. By using the proper precautions; by presenting just as much of the more objectionable aspects of her history as is necessary to obtain a proper conception of her character; by suppressing the rest; and by dwelling more at length upon those traits which were pre-eminently noble, commendable, and instructive, all the good effects may be attained, and all the evil ones avoided. The brilliant achievements of an unsur-

pased genius will thus become more familiar to the world, and secure the praises which they deserve; while the deformities which, like the spots upon the sun, unhappily deface and mar its splendor, will be allowed to sink harmlessly into that oblivion to which the prudence or the charity of mankind has consigned them.

Nor is the interest which attaches to the history of Catherine II. lessened by a contemplation of the career and characters of her successors to the Russian throne. Three of those, Paul, Alexander I., and Nich olas, have strongly exhibited in their characters and conduct the peculiarities of their descent; and have each, by their iron wills, their indomitable perseverance, their cruelties, and their crimes, left an ineffaceable impress upon the world's history. Alexander II. has yet to develop his distinctive qualities. He is evidently pursuing, with steady and unyielding purpose, the plan which fired the ambition of Catherine, and which has been perseveringly followed by each of her successors, in appropriating the dominions of the Sultan, and of which the present terrible struggle in Europe is one of the unfortunate results.

S. M. S.

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HISTORY

OF

CATHERINÈ II.

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PECULIARITIES OF RUSSIAN HISTORY.—ITS DEVELOPMENT OF GREAT CHARACTERS.—BIRTH OF THE PRINCESS SOPHIA OF ANHALT-ZERBST.—INCIDENTS OF HER YOUTH.—A MARRIAGE PROPOSED BETWEEN HER AND PETER FEDOROVITCH, GRAND DUKE OF RUSSIA.—SHE VISITS ST. PETERSBURG.—THE MARRIAGE SOLEMNIZED.—CHARACTER OF CATHERINE.—CHARACTER OF PETER, HER HUSBAND.

ALTHOUGH Russia assumed her rank and position among European nations at a comparatively recent period, yet, during her short career, she has developed some of the most remarkable characters that ever existed; and has displayed a progress in political grandeur, supremacy, and power, which has few parallels in human history. It may with truth be said, that everything connected with that country has been, in some measure, unique and remarkable. It is vast in its extent;

enclosing within its far-reaching arms half a continent. It has been vast in its antique barbarism and rugged simplicity; mighty in its numerical strength and physical grandeur; stupendous in its military struggles and achievements; as well as in the vaulting ambition of its sovereigns, which would add to the immense empire of the Czars, the dominion of Asia, and the conquest of the throne of the Constantines. The personal history of some of its princes has been characterized by a degree of sanguinary ferocity, and an excessive voluptuousness, which have a parallel only in the history of the Neros and the Messalinas of antiquity; while the career of others has exhibited a grandeur and elevation of character, which have justly won for them the immortal epithet of The Great. It was in such a country, and among such a people, that Catherine II., one of the most remarkable women of any age, was called, by the force of circumstances, to run her memorable career.

Sophia Frederica Augusta, the subject of this history, was the daughter of Christian Augustus, Prince of Anhalt-Zerbst, and was born at Stettin, in Prussian Pomerania, in May, 1729; four years after the death of Peter the Great, and two years after that of the first Catherine. In her youth, she was brought up in the simplest manner; and good-humour, intelligence, and decision were even then the striking features of her character. After she became sovereign of the Russian empire, she recollected the days and the scenes of her youth

with pleasure; and annually sent to the chief magistrate of Stettin, the medals which she caused to be struck in commemoration of the events of her reign, both those in gold and in silver.

The princess Sophia lived until her fifteenth year, alternately in Stettin or in Zerbst. She occasionally visited Hamburg with her mother; while, at other times, she spent her summers at Brunswick and Berlin. In 1743 she was introduced into the Lutheran Church, at the desire of her mother, by the court-preacher Dovè, at Brunswick; though, as will soon appear, she easily changed her religion, as policy rather than conviction afterward dictated. She was one year younger than Peter Fedorovitch, the heir apparent to the Russian throne; and a marriage was decided upon, by their respective families, between that prince and Sophia of Zerbst. Upon the occurrence of that event, she adopted the Greek religion, and assumed the name of Catherina Alexievna, which she afterward rendered illustrious by her genius, her passions, and her vicissitudes. This match was brought about by the intrigues and the influence of Frederic, King of Prussia, who saw in that alliance a prop to the security of his own throne; and an invitation was sent to the Princess of Zerbst, the mother of Catherine, by Elizabeth, the then reigning sovereign, to visit the court of St. Petersburg, bringing her daughter, the future empress, with her. She immediately complied, and it was

supposed that an attachment sprang up between the youthful princess and Peter, the heir apparent, which would render their future alliance as agreeable to their inclinations, as it was subservient to the policy of their respective families. The marriage was accordingly celebrated; and the enamoured princes appeared to present so strong an instance of conjugal attachment, as to secure a long continuance of harmony and affection. But their love was destined to be of short duration, though Catherine supported an outward show of good understanding with her silly and eccentric husband, as long as she conceived such a semblance necessary to her ambitious purposes.

The respective characters of these two persons, so unfortunately brought and linked together, were each peculiar in themselves; and were as incongruous and incompatible with each other, as could possibly be imagined. Catherine was a woman of great natural talents; quick, penetrative, crafty, ambitious, and unscrupulous. Brought up and educated near the court of the great Frederic, she had been taught to look upon him as the perfect model of a sovereign, who could sacrifice every person and principle, however sacred or dear, to the accomplishment of his ambitious aims. She was taught to admire the fertility of his resources, the energy of his measures, and the deepness and craftiness of his policy. Her own education had been carefully attended to, and her naturally

strong and masculine mind had been trained and developed with all the suitable learning and accomplishments of the age. She entered, therefore, upon her new and exalted arena of action fully armed, and prepared to achieve a memorable career.

Nor was her husband, Peter, absolutely devoid of talent, but his education had been totally neglected. His disposition was good, but his mind was uncultivated, and he was not only destitute of scientific acquirements, but his knowledge of men and of public affairs was limited and meagre in the extreme He constantly felt the superiority of his more gifted spouse, whose mental qualities were not only far higher than his own, but her physical advantages far greater. Peter was forbidding in his appearance, and almost deformed; while Catherine, in her youth, possessed a handsome, intelligent countenance, with a graceful and beautifully proportioned figure. The inferiority of her husband to herself was the first cause of the dislike and aversion which sprang up between them, and which afterward led to results, so fatal and disastrous to the prince.

Shortly after his marriage, the Empress presented Peter with the palace of Oranienbaum, which had formerly belonged to the famous Mentchikof. This palace was at some distance from St. Petersburg, situated on the romantic coast of the Gulf of Finland. It was built upon an eminence, formed by successive terraces ascending from the shore. It commanded a

beautiful prospect of the wide waste of waters of the Gulf, and the shipping at Cronstadt. It contained a chapel, and some of the apartments were splendidly fitted up. It was here that Peter, when Grand Duke, delighted to retire from the distractions of the court, and his domestic infelicities, to divert himself with rural sports, and the training of the few troops which he retained around him. His frequent retirement to this spot, and his consequent absence from the capital, afforded facilities for the execution of the plot, which, even at the time of which we are now speaking, had already struggled into an incipient existence

CHAPTER II.

DIFFICULTIES COMMENCE BETWEEN CATHERINE AND HER HUSBAND.—SHE RESOLVES TO DETHRONE HIM.—HER POLICY.—PETER'S VICES.—SOLTIKOF.—HIS ATTACHMENT TO CATHERINE.—HER FIRST LOVER.—STANISLAUS PONIATOSKY.—CATHERINE'S AFFECTION FOR HIM.—INCIDENTS OF THEIR INTRIGUE.

PETER, the heir apparent, was the nephew of Elizabeth, the then reigning sovereign of Russia. This princess had imbibed the notion that Peter was possessed of extraordinary capacity, and, ever since she had nominated him as her successor, had encouraged him in those habits of idleness which wholly unfitted him for his future position. Already Catherine began to conceive the outlines of that destiny which she afterward achieved; and began laying her plans, by rendering Peter obnoxious in every way to the courtiers and people. She found a most expert and appropriate minister of her nefarious designs, in Bestuchef, at that time Great Chancellor of the empire; who from the very day of the Grand Duke's marriage, had formed the design of excluding him from the throne, or at least of placing Catherine so completely at the head of affairs, as to render her husband's power utterly insignificant.

Having matured his plan, Bestuchef communicated his

projects to several of the courtiers in whom he could confide. His emissaries endeavoured to render the Grand Duke contemptible in the eyes of Elizabeth, by magnifying his defects and aggravating his vices. They even endeavoured to excite her fears, that he would become dangerous to her authority in the government. The feeble-minded Elizabeth was easily persuaded of the truth of these charges, and soon learned to hate and abhor the unhappy being, whom she once admired and cherished.

Peter indulged in a strong partiality for everything Prussian, resulting from his enthusiasm for the sovereign of that country, Frederic the Great. Even this innocent peculiarity of the prince was perverted by his enemies in the court, to his prejudice with the Empress. At his country palace of Oranienbaum, whither he often went in the pursuit of his pleasures, Peter introduced the Prussian customs of smoking, drinking, and gaming. His troops were dressed in Prussian uniforms, and manœuvred according to Prussian tactics. These and other peculiarities of his conduct excited, as his enemies intended they should, the suspicion and dislike of the Empress Elizabeth.

Catherine, on the other hand, pursued an entirely different course. Guided by her mother and her friends, at the Russian court, she was skilfully laying her plans, and endeavouring to gain partisans among the most influential persons of the

empire. Her violent predisposition to pleasure, which had already been powerfully, though secretly, developed, was silent and quiescent, at the mightier and more urgent calls of ambition. The value of these long and deeply laid intrigues afterward appeared, when the decisive moment arrived to consummate her purposes.

All the young men who surrounded and associated with the Grand Duke Peter, were not as entirely devoted to the pleasures of the table, the play, and the military parade, as himself. One of them, at least, was much admired for the graces of his person, and was distinguished, also, for his accomplished and successful gallantry. This was Soltikof, the prince's chamberlain. He had been a favourite among the ladies of the court; but now he dared to raise his aspiring eyes to the Grand Duchess herself, and attempted, not in vain, to win her affections. Catherine soon became sensible to his delicate attentions. His elegant figure, and the grace of his manner, for which he is said to have been remarkable, made an impression on her mind, and won him her love.

When Peter and his wife spent the summer at Oranienbaum, Soltikof never failed to make one of the party. On one of these occasions, the Grand Duchess feigned indisposition as an excuse for her absence from a ball given to the Prince's friends; and so infatuated was Peter in regard to his wife's fidelity, that he engaged Soltikof to amuse her loneliness, and to exert

himself to divert and cheer her solitude. This was precisely what the two lovers desired; and it may easily be imagined that they turned the fleeting moments to good account.

But so violent was Catherine's passion for her youthful favourite, that she had not sufficient self-command to conceal it from the prying and envious eyes of the jealous courtiers who surrounded them. Soon information was carried to the Empress Elizabeth, of this amour; and the ruin of Soltikof seemed inevitable. Though the Empress herself had her own intrigues, she was not bound to overlook or forgive those of her, whose offspring was to succeed her upon the throne. Soltikof boldly breasted the storm. He sought an interview with the Grand Duke. He represented to him how he had only waited on the princess in accordance with his own commands; and that her apparent partiality for him, was only the consequence of her gratitude for his efforts to relieve the tedium of her indisposition and solitude: that the whole slander was the mere offspring of the jealousy or envy of his private enemies.

Soltikof succeeded in completely imposing upon the credulity of the Grand Duke. The latter even ordered him to remain about the person of his wife, and in an audience with the Empress he complained of the infamous reports which had been spread about, and himself defended Soltikof with such vehemence, as completely to win over the confidence of Eliza-

beth. Henceforth the lovers indulged without apprehension, and scarcely without restraint, those pleasures from the consequences of which they now seemed to have nothing to dread.

During 1754 the progress of time, which enfeebles and often extinguishes the most ardent passions, failed to diminish that of Catherine. She expected soon to become a mother. Soltikof was daily becoming more powerful in his influence over her; but his star had culminated, and he became himself the artificer of his own downfall.

He had unfortunately incurred the enmity of Bestuchef, the all-powerful Grand Chancellor of the empire, who thereupon resolved to effect his ruin. To accomplish this purpose, the wily minister pretended the greatest friendship for the favourite; asked his advice in reference to important affairs of state; and communicated to him some of the most delicate political and cabinet secrets. The confidence of Soltikof was completely won, and his caution disarmed. In a moment of thoughtless and fatal confidence, he divulged to Bestuchef the secret of his connexion with the Grand Duchess. No sooner was this communication made, than the minister revealed it to the Prince and the Empress. All efforts to save Soltikof were now fruitless; tears and protestations were alike unavailing, and the fallen favourite was ordered to a perpetual exile—not to Siberia indeed, as he might have been—but to Hamburg; yet far removed from the tender embraces and the

fostering care of her, of whose heart he had once been the haughty and undisputed sovereign. Thus ends the brief record of the first of those numerous connexions, which gave so peculiar as well as so repulsive an aspect to the life and career of this remarkable woman.

No sooner had the last tender adieux taken place between the distracted lovers, than the Russian court was visited by a personage who was soon destined to indemnify Catherine for the loss of her lover, and heal up the wounds of her lacerated heart. Yet he was but one of a long series of successful aspirants, who in turn enjoyed the benefits of her partiality

This fortunate individual was Count Stanislaus Poniatosky, whose father was an adventurer in Lithuania, and who, for some valuable political services, obtained promotion from Augustus II., King of Poland. In 1755 the young count visited St. Petersburg. He was destitute of fortune, but was endowed with a handsome figure and a high ambition. Some years he had spent in France and Germany, in the pursuit of gay adventures and vague expectations. In Paris, the friendship of the Swedish ambassador had procured him distinguished connexions; but his extravagances there had brought him to prison for debt, from which he had been relieved by the generosity of one of his female admirers, Madame Geoffrin. Poniatosky, on leaving Paris, repaired to London, where he met Sir Charles Williams, whom he had formerly known at Warsaw;

and who being appointed, by the court of St. James, ambassador to St. Petersburg, engaged the handsome and adventurous Pole to accompany him thither. He was by nature gay, witty, and fascinating, and being thrown into society with the susceptible Duchess Sophia, the future Empress, he soon perceived the impression which he had involuntarily made upon her. For some time the two lovers conversed only by their looks, but soon they declared, upon the first favourable opportunity, their mutual attachment, and sought for the means of indulging their inclinations: and it would have been singular had they not succeeded!

But the ever restless eyes of envious rivals had not been closed upon their conduct, and the Empress Elizabeth was soon informed, by their officious interference, of this new connexion. She gave orders to Poniatosky to quit Russia without delay. He obeyed. But Catherine was not the woman to be thwarted thus a second time, in the greatest, and now, the most imperious necessity of her existence—to love and to be loved. She cast about her for means to remedy the calamity under which she suffered. She thought of Bestuchef, the Grand Chancellor, still, as formerly, the most powerful subject in the empire. With his usual sagacity this minister had discovered, that though he might banish lovers, and even render the Grand Duke Peter a cipher at the court, Catherine was a woman of such stupendous vigour of mind and resolu-

tion of purpose, that she was a match in statesmanship even for himself; that it would be unsafe to attempt to thwart her, much less to vanquish her; and that he was strengthening his own pathway to future influence by assisting her in her purposes, and rendering himself as indispensable to her as possible.

He immediately endeavoured to promote the Grand Duchess's wishes, by using the influence of Count De Brühl, the minister of the Polish sovereign. He became the patron of Poniatosky, and at length succeeded in obtaining for his *protegé*, the important appointment of minister from the Polish King, to the court of St. Petersburg. Then commenced that career of successful love, which, by its stupendous energy, finally elevated its happy subject to the splendid dignity of the Polish throne. Poniatosky was never absent from her. To him she devoted all her time, and she made so little secrecy of this unlawful attachment, that the public opinion of even the dissipated capital of the Czars was loud in her censure. In February, 1758, she was delivered of the princess Anne, who only survived fifteen months.

As is often the case, the injured husband was the only person at court who was unconscious of his wrongs, and was ignorant of his Duchess's conduct. But it is unreasonable to suppose that his infatuation could last for ever. The unwelcome light at length broke in upon the Grand Duke's

mind; and that under the following circumstances. The prince was informed of the secret interviews which took place between the lovers; he was also convinced that Bestuchef the Grand Chancellor, was the patron of those intrigues, and that it was to his skilful management, that he owed his injuries and his disgrace. He communicated these facts to the Empress Elizabeth. Incensed at the treachery of Bestuchef, she gave immediate orders for his arrest. The fallen minister passed at once from the dizzy height of absolute power, to degradation and captivity: he whose nod, an hour since, had shaken all Russia, and before whom the proudest courtiers and grandees had bent with profoundest reverence; who had commanded the obedience of vast armies, and disposed of the resources of mighty provinces,—was arrested, deprived of his dignities and his princely fortune, was pronounced guilty of high treason, and condemned to death. His sentence, however, was afterward changed to banishment to one hundred and twenty versts from Moscow. Vorontzof succeeded him as Grand Chancellor.

Catherine herself was now overwhelmed with affliction. But powerful minds *rebound* from an error or a misfortune, with a force proportionate to that which impelled them to it; and possess a self-sustaining energy, which enables them to defy a calamity beneath the weight of which, weaker minds

would sink. Catherine never for a moment lost her courage, though much distressed. Her first attempts to gain an audience with the Empress Elizabeth, which had been boldly made, were unavailing. She was refused all access to her; and she had, for a time, to endure the hatred of her husband, the displeasure of the Empress, the insults of the subservient court; and, what was to her most distressing of all, the fear of losing for ever the society and the embraces of her beloved Poniatosky.

The meetings of the lovers were then held under the mantle of night; and very frequently, Catherine, properly disguised as a peasant girl, would leave the palace by a secret door, and Dalolio, an Italian comedian, would conduct her safely to the house of M. Yelaguin, a Frenchman, in the confidence and service of Poniatosky, where the latter received her. The ever wakeful eyes of suspicion and malice were continually on the alert, and discovered, at length, even this retreat. The Empress was duly informed of the occurrence.

But Catherine's mental resources proved themselves equal to the task which she had to perform. She bribed the mistress of the Grand Duke, her husband; and by *her* influence, Poniatosky, who had himself been arrested, was set at liberty. She demanded from the Empress permission immediately to retire to Germany. As her character and actions were only aspersed in her adopted country, she would for ever desert

and abandon so ungrateful, so inhospitable a land and court. This last appeal had the desired effect. Her son, Paul Petrovitch, who afterwards ascended the throne, was the darling and favourite of the Empress; who would not allow the departure of the mother of a child whom she loved, and whose legitimacy might afterwards be called in question, in consequence of her flight. The Empress forgave her; forbade her to return to Germany, reinstated her in her dignities and honours; and to the astonishment of the whole court, appeared with her niece in the imperial box in the theatre, where she carefully drew upon her the notice of the audience by her kind assiduities and friendly attentions. But no present reverse of fortune, no peril nor danger, could as yet dampen the ardour of the lovers; though it inspired within them a greater caution, as well as artifice: yet it is an instructive incident in the history of the human mind, that these two devoted persons, after the lapse of many years, and the experience of many of the vicissitudes of fortune, met upon the distant shores of the Euxine Sea, the one as Empress of Russia, the other as King of Poland, to which high dignity he had been elevated by her own youthful affection and partiality:—they met, and in the presence of their respective suites, held a cold, jealous, and hostile interview! What a commentary on the faithfulness of even woman's love! How evanescent may be

even the most powerful and romantic of human attachments! How wisely and truly did Solomon, the Jewish Solon, who had fully tested and exhausted the most exquisite of human pleasures, pronounce them, after all, to be but vanity and vexation!

CHAPTER III.

PETER'S PURPOSE TO REPUDIATE CATHERINE, AND DECLARE HER DAUGHTER ILLEGITIMATE.—CATHERINE NOW MATURES HER CONSPIRACY.—COUNT PANIN.—GREGORY ORLOF.—DEATH OF THE EMPRESS ELIZABETH.—PETER'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE.—INSULTS OFFERED BY PETER TO HIS WIFE.—HE DETERMINES TO DECLARE IVAN III. HIS SUCCESSOR.—GREGORY ORLOF BECOMES CATHERINE'S FAVOURITE.—THE PRINCESS DASHKOF.—ODART.—ALEXIUS ORLOF.—THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST PETER FIRST INTENDED ONLY TO DETHRONE HIM.

PERILS of a less romantic character began, in the year 1762, to surround Catherine. The party of her friend and patron Bestuchef, was in ruins. His successor, Vorontzof, was a bold and ambitious man, not devoid of energy and talent. His daughter was publicly acknowledged as the mistress of the Grand Duke; which disgraceful connexion he himself approved and promoted. The access which he had to the Grand Duke, gave him many opportunities to exasperate him against his wife; and suggested to his wounded mind many thoughts, fatal to her interests, her security, and her happiness. He at length completely controlled and overpowered Peter's mind; and under his influence as well as that of his mistress, he had come to the conclusion, that the instant the Empress

Elizabeth had expired, he would assemble the troops; cause himself to be proclaimed Emperor; repudiate and divorce the Grand Duchess; declare the young Paul Petrovich illegitimate, as certainly he was; and publicly marry his mistress, Elizaveta Vorontzof.

But Catherine, with her usual ability, opposed the plot which threatened her, by a counterplot equally formidable Being now on good terms with the Empress, she employed her emissaries in poisoning the mind of that weak and aged princess against the Grand Duke, and thus, by surrounding him with peril, compel him to seek his own safety in conciliation with herself. Catherine's most important agent in this intrigue was Count Panin, who had lately returned from Stockholm, where he had resided in a diplomatic capacity; and who afterward for many years served Catherine faithfully and well, as her prime minister. By his able efforts the mind of the Empress became so alienated from the Grand Duke, that he had for some time been entirely excluded from her presence. He saw the danger which overhung him, of being excluded entirely from the throne, on the death of the Empress, whose last sickness had then already begun; and who was confined by it to her own apartment. He knew that his wife had the confidence of the Empress, and that it was through her alone that a reconciliation could take place. Catherine, to accomplish her own ends, was not unwilling for the present, to ac-

quiesce in the proposals made by her husband for an accommodation. Upon suitable assurances being made her, that all hostile measures against herself should be abandoned, she agreed to act with the Grand Duke for their mutual interests. The plan devised to win back the good will of her, upon whom the succession of both to the throne depended, was to engage the services of the dying Empress's confessor. A moment was chosen when she seemed propitious to any tender emotion. The bribed confessor, approaching the couch of Elizabeth, discoursed to her calmly and eloquently of heavenly things; and of the Supreme and Eternal Sovereign by whom all earthly Monarchs reign. He spoke of his infinite justice, his wisdom, his mercy; and of that august tribunal, before which they alone can obtain forgiveness hereafter, who themselves forgive. He then dwelt upon the ecstatic joys of that immortal Paradise to which they are admitted, who fulfil this duty of mercy, and thus obey the divine example and commands of Him, who dwelt among men, himself a Sovereign and a God, to bless, to save, and to die for them. At this critical moment, when the weak, yet excited, fancy of the Empress was favourably disposed, in view of such satisfactory rewards, to acts of benevolence and duty, the Grand Duke and Duchess, hand in hand, entered the apartment, and fell upon their knees at her bedside. Elizabeth was surprised and overcome; she told them, with emotion, that she had always loved them, and that

with her dying breath she wished them every blessing. The reconciliation was complete.

Shortly after this important event, the Grand Duke received word that his aunt, the Empress Elizabeth, "commanded him to live long," or in other words, that she had expired. This event occurred on the 5th of January, 1762.

Immediately upon her death, the Grand Duke assumed the title of Peter III. But there were none of those happy displays of joy which the populace usually exhibit upon the accession to the throne of a youthful prince. His first acts were imprudent; for, instead of hastening his coronation at Moscow, which was of the utmost importance to establishing him upon the throne, he talked of visiting Germany, and paying his respects to the great Frederic. Yet, to say truth, he was not at first sanguinary in the exercise of his power; he did not wreak his vengeance upon his enemies: yet in his first manifesto he said nothing of his consort, nor of his reputed son;—of itself a suspicious and mysterious circumstance.

The new Czar, on his first accession to the throne, invited the foreign ministers to his audience, and received their congratulations with the dignity which became a prince. This appropriate behaviour, which was entirely in opposition to the idea which had been universally entertained of the character of the Grand Duke, surprised them But what astonished

them still more, was the fact, that in a splendid repast which he gave them, he behaved with great propriety; was reserved and impressive in his discourse, and drank with great moderation. In a word, every one expressed astonishment and pleasure, at the improvement which they observed in the prince, at once so commendable and so unexpected.

It was impossible, however, for him to conceal the great admiration which he entertained for the King of Prussia, the immortal Frederic. He set at liberty all the Prussian prisoners who were confined at St. Petersburg, and admitted them to his table. One of them whom he treated with the greatest respect was the Count de Hordt; a Swedish officer, who had entered into the service of Frederic, and whom Elizabeth had detained three years in exile. The King of Prussia had caused a Russian officer to be broken alive on the wheel, for forming a plot of revolt, and planning a massacre of the garrison at Custrin, where he had been kept a prisoner. When Hordt appeared before Peter III. and related to him that, independently of the ill-treatment he had received in prison, by the order of Elizabeth, he was also deprived of the use of books, Catherine, who was present, exclaimed: "That was very barbarous!" Peter took him into his confidence; made him his friend, and delighted to hear from him, details of the private life and personal history of his favourite hero. But he rarely invited the foreign ministers to his court, excepting

the Prussian Envoy, and the British Minister. Peter had long kept up a close correspondence with Frederic, whom he always addressed as his dear brother, or as his worthy master. He reminded him, in one of his letters, that previous to his being elected Grand Duke, he had enjoyed the high honour of serving in the army, and even went so far as to ask the Prussian monarch to advance him to a higher military rank.

Frederic, as might be supposed, very cunningly took advantage of the enthusiasm of the Russian autocrat, for the promotion of his own personal interests. He did not immediately bestow upon Peter the rank which he solicited, that he might induce him to desire it the more eagerly; and thus entertain a higher estimate of the value of the honour when conferred But after due time, he wrote him in reply, that he had appointed him Major-General; not in his quality as prince, but only on account of the military skill which he believed him to possess. This pretended and empty compliment filled the silly prince with joy. He was thenceforth a still more ardent admirer of the King of Prussia than ever before. He caused his portrait to be placed in his chamber, and celebrated his military promotion by a feast of great splendour at St. Petersburg. He almost seemed crazed by the insane ecstasy produced by this new honour. He said one day, to the hetman Razumosky, "Do you know, that before I was Grand Duke, I was lieutenant in the service of the King of Prussia!"

"Well," replied the hardy and satirical old Cossack; "your majesty may now make the King of Prussia, a field-marshal!"

This ascendency of the King of Prussia over the weak mind of the Czar, was displeasing, not only to the foreign ministers, who resided at his court, but also to all his own subjects. His changes, produced by his Prussian infatuation, caused him many enemies. It injured his best plans; and, his desire for making improvements as an imitator of the King of Prussia, which were not always suited to the peculiar genius and character of the Russian nation, led him often into innovations of the most injurious and undesirable nature. He took the vast possessions of the Greek Church, and turned them into domains of the Crown. He compelled the clergy to live on yearly salaries, varying from five thousand to one hundred and fifty rubles. It was very unpolitic in him, at the commencement of his reign, to array against him the most powerful interest in the state,—that which, in all monarchical governments, is represented by the established church and religion. But especially in Russia, where the ignorance and the superstition of the people were commensurate, it was exceedingly unwise in a youthful sovereign, who had not yet become firmly established upon his throne, to imitate, in so dangerous and delicate a matter, the high-handed measure of so daring and powerful an innovator as Frederic the Great.

The enemies of Peter, who were, it must be confessed, the partisans of Catherine, took advantage of these acts of Peter, to render him unpopular with the nation. They proclaimed from one extremity of the empire to the other, that the Emperor had only pretended to embrace the Greek religion, in order that he might be able to occupy the throne; that he was still a bigoted Lutheran at heart; and that he was every day giving fresh proof of this, his horrible apostacy, by showing a profound contempt for the rites, ceremonies, and ancient religion of the Russians. To confirm these reports, the people were reminded that he had caused a Lutheran chapel to be built in his palace at Oranienbaum; that at the consecration of that chapel, he had distributed hymn-books, with his own hands, to his Holstein soldiers; and that he had refused even to enter a Greek church which had been built and consecrated about the same time. It was added, that he had insulted the saints by calling two of his newly constructed ships of war by the sacred names of St. Nicholas and St. Alexander. It was asserted by his enemies, that he never spoke of the Russian empire but with contempt; and never referred to the Germans but with respect; that he regarded the former as hopeless barbarians and savages, and the latter, as the representatives of national intelligence, science, and refinement. Peter also gave great offence to his own troops, by the changes which he introduced among them. He was constantly showing his

preference for his German troops over the Russian. He disbanded the noble guards who had formerly placed Elizabeth on the throne, and substituted his Holstein regiments for the horse-guards, who had before, for generations, performed all military service around the court. He also introduced into the army, the Prussian exercise, which was undoubtedly better than the one to which his troops had been accustomed, but which displeased them, because it was new, and still to be learned. He appointed his uncle, Prince George of Holstein, an officer of but little experience, to the high rank of generalissimo of the Russian armies. In a word, he so prejudiced even his own troops against him, that he entirely lost their attachment, and rendered them fit instruments for any movement of an insurrectionary character which might be started against him, and his throne. By these means, the priesthood and the army were both alienated from him—and prepared for a revolution.

But that which most displeased all classes of his subjects, was his declared resolution to reacquire, by force of arms, the Grand Duchy of Schleswig, which the King of Denmark had seized, to the injury of the Dukes of Holstein. To this country Peter laid claim, by titles which certainly appeared to possess some appearance of strength. But to attempt, at that moment, the establishment of his claims by conquest, was most impolitic. The King of Prussia, who seemed in

this case to have acted as his sincere friend, endeavoured to dissuade him from the attempt. The effect of his representations was only a temporary postponement of the expedition, which the Czar proposed to resume at some future day. But long before its arrival, the hand of the assassin had done its bloody work, and given the prince his *quietus*.

The sagacious Frederic seems to have foreseen, even at this early period, the disastrous consequences of the conduct of the Czar. He also already detected the commanding superiority of his wife, and presaged, that at some future day she would sit upon her husband's throne, and wield a sceptre of which she was the more worthy. Accordingly, at this time (1762), he gave strict orders to his minister at St. Petersburg, to pay particular court to the Empress, to secure her good will, and to be much more solicitous of siding with her, in the disputes which rent the imperial family, than with her doomed husband.

During the first few days of Peter's reign, he treated the Empress with marked kindness; spent many hours with her in her apartments; and seemed to do honour to her superior understanding, by asking her advice respecting important affairs of state. Through her influence he recalled Biren, Duke of Courland, from his long exile in Siberia, as well as other distinguished persons. But this favourable change in the feelings of the sovereign did not prove of long duration.

Surrounded by his corrupt associates in the palace, he soon relapsed into his former habits of dissipation; spent most of his time in the apartments of his mistress; and passed whole days in a state of continual intoxication.

In 1762, the events of which year we are now narrating, commenced that series of open hostilities and insults between the royal pair, which eventually resulted in one of the most memorable, as well as detestable, conspiracies recorded in the annals of empire; and which occasioned to Peter the loss of queen, of crown, and of life itself. The disgust and aversion of the sovereigns could now no longer be concealed; and at a public festival Peter appeared, seated by the side of Catherine, while on his left his mistress, the Countess Vorontzoff, was directed by him to take her seat. The Empress immediately retired, without receiving from her husband any apology for the insult thus cast upon her. The same evening at supper he drank the health of his relation Prince George of Holstein, at which all the company rose, excepting Catherine. Peter, irritated at her conduct, became enraged, and addressed an opprobrious epithet to his wife, which, whether true or false, he should never have applied to the partner of his throne Immediately Catherine burst into tears, and in a low voice bemoaned to her chamberlain, Stroganof, the greatness of the affront thus put upon her. For his sympathy for the

insulted Empress, that officer was immediately put under arrest.

After this event, the hostility of the imperial couple seemed irremediable. The far-reaching glance of Catherine now saw the inevitable end from the beginning; and was convinced that either the one or the other must vanquish, or be crushed by his opponent. She began to prepare, accordingly, to play the hazardous game before her, with coolness and determination. She visited the churches daily, and became the most devout and charitable woman in the empire. By favours and promotions she courted the attachment of the most able and useful persons about the court, many of whom Peter was daily offending by his arrogance and his debaucheries. He rendered himself despicable by his conduct toward his mistress; for he promised her, to repudiate Catherine, to place her upon the vacant throne; and she carried her impertinent authority over him so far, as sometimes to apply personal violence to him to compel him to comply with her caprices. The daily conduct of the Czar was thus calculated to inspire contempt in the minds of his subjects, while that of the Empress was most studiously adapted to produce the opposite result, in the palace and with the populace, among both friends and foes. Yet the bitterness and fierceness of this domestic conflict did not prevent her from indulging what, as we have said, had now be-

come the most imperious necessity of her existence—that of the society of a favourite and a lover.

The court, and even her own confidants, supposed, that she was still most deeply afflicted at the absence of Poniatosky, and was rigidly faithful in her devotion to him. Never was there a greater mistake, and never was woman's wit more successfully employed, at once to deceive her acquaintances, and at the same time, to gratify her propensities. One of Catherine's confidants in her conspiracy against her husband, was the Princess Dashkof, the sister of the Emperor's mistress. That lady selected as an associate with her in her plans, Gregory Orlof, an aid-de-camp of Count Peter Schuvalof; a man possessed of all the qualities necessary to a successful conspirator. Princess Dashkof had been for months plotting with Orlof, without once suspecting that Orlof knew the Empress; and Orlof had for months been admitted to the secret embraces of the Empress, without once suspecting the exalted rank of the object of his attachment. The only person in the secret, was one of Catherine's own women, named Ivanovna, the most ingenious of confidants, as well as the least scrupulous. She managed the intrigue with such address, that the meetings of the lovers were held in a house in a small street in St. Petersburg, on the banks of the Moïka, a little river running through the city, which she had rented and furnished for their use, by the command of Catherine.

This new and successful aspirant had neither the advantages of fortune, of birth, or of education; but he possessed what was far more attractive to the female mind, intelligence and masculine beauty. There were five brothers of this family: Gregory, the favourite; Alexius, afterward admiral; Vladimir, afterward senator; Feodor, the chamberlain; and Ivan, who became a colonel. Count Schuvalof had the vanity of desiring that his aids-de-camp should be the handsomest men in the army. He had selected Orlof, and this position first brought the latter to the notice of Catherine, whose skilful eye at once discerned his physical advantages, while she afterward appreciated, upon a more intimate acquaintance, the superior mental qualities which he possessed. All these proceedings were carried on, while Poniatosky and his friends were indulging in the pleasing delusion, that the devoted Empress was languishing for the presence of her absent lover. They still continued, indeed, to correspond, and he to remain cuckolded; until, after the death of the Czar Peter, Poniatosky asked permission to return to St. Petersburg, to share her heart and throne, when he was flatly refused, and was thus suddenly undeceived.*

* Gregory Orlof at this period was young and robust. He enjoyed all the influence and honours united, which afterward adorned the powerful Potempkin, and burdened the effeminate Zubof. The Empress was then also in the bloom of her youth. Beside her acknowledged son by Gregory, named Bobrinsky, who is elsewhere spoken

The princess Dashkof, whom we have named, was a remarkable woman. She was the bosom friend of Catherine, and resembled her in her personal beauty, her decision of mind, and masculine energy. She was jealous of the threatened elevation of her sister to the place of Empress, and determined to prevent it. Catherine, happy in the love of Orlof, had now nothing else to do, but to mature that conspiracy, by which Peter III. was to be dethroned, and herself elevated to an undivided supremacy. She and Princess Dashkof set themselves seriously to work, in connexion with Orlof, to mature their plans. Odart, the secretary of the princess, was first brought over. This was a French adventurer, whose talents for political intrigue were respectable, and whom his mistress knew sufficiently well, to be intrusted with so delicate and dangerous a matter But the power of such associates

to this work, two pretty maids of honour whom Madam Protassof, first lady of the bed-chamber, educated as her nieces, are likewise reputed to be Catherine's daughters by Orlof. Twelve years of uninterrupted intimacy with his sovereign, added to his haughtiness, disgusted her at length with his person, and Potempkin then assumed his place, after a long and jealous rivalry between them. His disgrace and his mortified jealousy broke down his mind and health, and the once proud, powerful, and magnificent Orlof died in the most horrible state of insanity. It was asserted that Potempkin poisoned him with an herb, which possessed the quality of turning the brain. *Vide Secret Memoirs of the Court of St. Petersburg.* **London, 1801.** *Vol. I. p.* 105.

was of little consequence. It was necessary to obtain the co-operation of some of the great men of the state: the Hetman Razumosky and Count Panin were the most available in such an emergency; and these, after the proper exertions and solicitations on the part of Orlof, were duly gained over to the ranks of the conspirators.

The great influence of these men in the state, and in the army, made their acquisition of the greatest importance. They attached as many of their respective friends as were necessary and prudent, to the cause. Volkonsky, major-general of the guards, a relation of Bestuchef, the exiled minister, and the inheritor of his hatred to Peter III., was easily added to their number. The Archbishop of Novogorod, also an enemy of that sovereign, was united to the conspiracy, and, with him, was obtained the future valuable and powerful aid and influence of the ecclesiastical orders. The Princess Dashkof exerted herself to add the support and co-operation of the brothers of Gregory Orlof, in person not less handsome, in spirit not less bold and aspiring, than he, and possessing a physical ferocity and strength which surpassed even his own. The Empress's favourite had duly informed her of these accessions to their numbers, but when the Princess Dashkof came to apprise her of her own successful efforts with them, the dissembling sovereign, with consummate skill, was careful neither to undeceive her friend, or to affront her vanity.

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The first object of the conspiracy was only to dethrone Peter III. The next was to determine how to dispose of the reins of empire after his deposition. Catherine, true to the ambition of her nature, wished to reign sole Empress. Count Panin, on the other hand, contended that her son Paul should be declared Emperor, and she be appointed Regent, and thus virtually govern the empire. Long and violent were the disputes of the conspirators on this subject, which began to become dangerous even to the interests of the faction. At length, the resources of the female conspirators found a potent remedy for the evil. Panin, in his interviews with the Princess Dashkof, had been captivated by her boldness, intelligence, and beauty. She easily discovered the power she exerted over him, and took means to increase it. He soon made an open declaration of his passion. At first she received him with coldness, but it was not her virtue which impelled her to reject his suit. Too many other suitors had already experienced that it was not invincible. After due delays, on the part of the lady, and proper protestations on the part of the enamoured Count, the princess consented to whatever Panin proposed, and Catherine had no more opposition to apprehend on the part of the successful lover.

The principal preparations for the conspiracy had now been made. Peter III., utterly unconscious of the peril which overhung him, was wholly devoted to pleasure, and his military

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expedition against Denmark. He little thought of the fatal crisis in his destiny, which was approaching with silent, yet irresistible certainty.

The crafty and aspiring Empress was active and determined. Peter had fixed his departure for Denmark on the day following the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul. The blow must be struck ere his departure. Her party were patiently waiting the moment of action. The revolutionary elements yet remained as still and quiescent as a pent-up volcano. The dauntless Catherine might now have used the language of another aspirant to a throne, not less ambitious, but less successful, than she:

"Now my golden dream is out!
Ambition like an early friend throws back
My curtains with an eager hand, o'erjoyed
To tell me what I dreamt—is true. A Crown!
Thou bright reward of ever-daring minds,
Oh, how thine awful glory wraps my soul!
Nor can the means that got thee, dim thy lustre.
For fame not more survives from good,
Than evil deeds."

CHAPTER IV.

PREMATURE EXPLOSION OF THE PLOT.—DESPERATE ENERGY AND DETERMINATION OF THE CONSPIRATORS.—CATHERINE BROUGHT TO ST. PETERSBURG.—SHE RECEIVES THE HOMAGE OF THE TROOPS.—PETER UNINFORMED OF THESE TRANSACTIONS AT PETERHOF, WHERE HE WAS RESIDING.—THE FIRST NEWS OF THE CONSPIRACY.—OVERCOME WITH TERROR.—FLIES TO CRONSTADT.—MARSHAL MUNICH.—PETER GOES TO ORANIENBAUM.—HE WRITES TO CATHERINE.—HE WRITES A SECOND MORE SUPPLIANT LETTER.—HE ABDICATES THE THRONE.—TRIUMPH OF CATHERINE.—REACTION OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT.—PETER A PRISONER AT ROPSCHA.—HIS VIOLENT DEATH.

ACCIDENT discovered the plot, which had been so ably prepared, a day sooner than had been intended by its authors. But that event, which seemed to be in the highest degree unfortunate, was in reality the most propitious to the accomplishment of the ends of the conspirators; the very desperation of their case now nerved their energies to immediate and mortal conflict.

Passick, one of the conspirators, had gained over many of the officers and soldiers of his regiment. A soldier, thinking that Passick had secured the aid of the commander of his corps, asked that officer on what day they were to

take up arms against the Emperor. The commander was surprised, and dissimulated. He obtained from the soldier some of the particulars of the conspiracy, which he immediately proceeded to report to the chancery of the regiment. It was now nine o'clock at night. Passick and the soldier were arrested. But these succeeded in sending word to the Princess Dashkof of what had occurred. She instantly sent for Panin, Gregory Orlof, and others of the leading conspirators. Their resolution was unanimous immediately to commence the revolutionary movement. Orlof repaired to the barracks, to prepare those troops for action, which had already been tampered with, and won over. Alexius Orlof started for Peterhof, at some miles distance of Petersburg, where Catherine then was, to bring her immediately to the capital.

Catherine lodged in a small summer-house called Montplaisir, romantically situated at the extremity of the garden of that palace, on the shore of the Gulf of Finland. Her only attendant was her waiting-woman, whom we have already named, Ivanovna. A small boat was fastened to the shore, for the convenience of her favourites, whom she there frequently honoured with an interview.

It was now two o'clock in the morning. Catherine, terrified at the sudden interruption, arose, dressed, and entered the carriage which had been sent for her accommodation. Alexius

Orlof took the reins and set off with speed. The horses soon broke down, and the party were compelled to alight. They were yet some miles from Petersburg, and their situation was critical. They fortunately found a light country cart. They entered it and drove on. They now met the carriage of Gregory Orlof, with whom they drove in haste to the capital, at which they arrived at seven o'clock in the morning.

The Empress immediately proceeded with her attendants to the barracks, where she received the submission of the troops. Two persons alone of the regiments refused their acclamations. They were immediately arrested. Surrounded by the soldiers, she proceeded to the palace. The inhabitants of the capital mechanically followed the motions of the soldiery, and united with their applauses. She then repaired to the metropolitan church, when the Archbishop of Novogorod appeared in his pontifical vestments; placed the imperial crown upon her head; proclaimed her sovereign of all the Russias, by the name of Catherine II.; and declared her son, the Grand Duke Paul, her successor. Meantime the conspirators were unwearied in placing the several quarters of the city in defence The Empress was now surrounded by fifteen thousand troops, and was doubtless prepared to make a resistance much more desperate than that which was actually required. During this day the principal nobles who had taken no part in the con-

spiracy, resorted to the palace, and offered their homage, and oaths of fidelity to the new empress.

Astounding as it may appear, no information of all these proceedings had yet been carried to the deluded Czar; but he spent the day in his usual diversions. He set out from the palace of Oranienbaum, where he then was, in his carriage with his mistress and other favourites, to be present at the festivities which were to take place at Peterhof the next day. On the road a messenger informed him only of Catherine's departure from Peterhof on the preceding day. Upon receiving this information, he became very much agitated, and proceeding rapidly to Peterhof, arrived there, rushed to the pavilion which had been occupied by Catherine, and then with dismay, discovered the truth of the information he had received.

Shortly after he received a letter from Bressau, stating that a rebellion had broken out that morning at Petersburg; that the troops had taken arms in favour of Catherine; and that she had been crowned. The Chancellor Vorontzof immediately repaired, by orders of the Czar, to Petersburg, and to the presence of Catherine, and began to proclaim to her the peril and hopelessness of her attempt. But beholding the fierce and threatening glances of the officers and courtiers around him, his courage vanished, he changed his allegiance, and took the oath of obedience with the rest!

Meanwhile Peter remained the victim of the greatest terrors. Marshal Munich was the only person about him who could give advice worthy of the least confidence. Had he obeyed the injunction of this aged and experienced veteran, he might have been saved. He advised him to put himself at the head of his troops which were with him, preparing for his Danish expedition; proceed to the capital; and there contend for the mighty prize at issue, by force of arms. But news arriving of the approach of the Empress, with an army of 20,000 men, the women in the suite of the Czar became so terrified, that they persuaded him to resign his hostile intentions, and he was induced to embark for Cronstadt, where he expected to find the garrison faithful to him.

But in this expectation he was disappointed. On arriving there, he discovered, that the emissaries of Catherine had anticipated him, and that the garrison had already joined her partisans. The cannon were levelled, and the matches lighted, on his approach; and when the Emperor was announced to the guard, he was answered, "There is no Emperor, long live the Empress Catherine!" Peter, embarrassed and dismayed, gave orders to the rowers of his yacht to cut the cable, and pull away from the ill-fated spot. When a short distance from the shore, the rowers stopped. It was a fine night. The fallen Emperor, and his Marshal Munich, who, though he had witnessed many strange vicissitudes of fortune during his long

and checkered life, had never seen so great an one as this,—sat upon the deck, contemplating, in mournful silence, the starry vault of heaven, and the calm surface of the murmuring sea. They then must have felt deeply the vanity of human glory, and the instability of human affairs, compared with the permanency of nature's eternal works, upon which they were gazing.

The steersman desired to know whither he should direct the vessel. Munich advised him to join the squadron at Revel, and prepare for an active defence. But it seemed as if the women and courtiers had conspired to ruin the unfortunate prince, and they urged the distance of the place, and the danger of the attempt. Yielding to their supplications, he ordered the rowers to take the direction of Oranienbaum. It was four o'clock in the morning when they reached that place. Peter commanded his domestics not to divulge the news of his return, shut himself up in his apartments, and secretly wrote to the Empress.

Meanwhile the Empress, flushed with the success which had so far attended her career, advanced at the head of her army toward Peterhof. At the monastery of St. Sergus, near Strelna, where she reposed for an hour on the cloaks which the officers of her suite had made into a bed for her, she received the letter from the Czar, proposing to share the imperial authority with her. Catherine took no notice of it whatever

On her approach to Oranienbaum, Peter had that little fortress dismantled, to convince his wife that he had no hostile intentions; sent her another letter, imploring her mercy, offering to resign the crown, and asking only a pension and liberty to retire into Holstein. To this epistle Catherine deigned no answer. She even bought over the servant who brought it, and sent him back commissioned to persuade the Czar to submit unconditionally to her will. After some deliberation, the unhappy Czar concluded to follow the advice of this traitor. He proceeded in his carriage to the position occupied by the Empress and her troops. On approaching nearer, he was stripped of the insignia of his rank, and even of his clothes He remained for some time among the soldiery, in his shirt, and barefoot—the butt of their ridicule, the object of their contempt; till at length he was shut up alone in a room, with a guard at the door.

The Empress sent Count Panin to confer with the Czar. The interview resulted in his signing an instrument and declaration, whereby he resigned all title to the throne; acknowledging his unfitness to hold empire; and appointing the Empress sole sovereign of all the Russias.* This instrument was dated June 29th, 1762. This wonderful revolution, accomplished in one day, and as yet, without shedding a drop

* See the Appendix, Nos. I. and II., containing the proclamations made by Catherine, at the period of her usurpation.

of blood, seems rather a tale of romance, than the narration of sober history. Peter had reigned precisely six months, from the death of Elizabeth to the day of his abdication. Under happier stars, and under more propitious circumstances, he would have left a name, which, if it did not claim from posterity respect for its grandeur and greatness, might at least have secured the honour due goodness and usefulness.

Catherine slept that night at Peterhof, no longer a captive, but now an absolute sovereign. At her levée, among those who presented their homage, was the family of the Princess Dashkof, who were forgiven and received by the Empress at her intercession. On Marshal Munich presenting himself, the Empress called out aloud, "Field-marshal, it was you then, who wanted to fight me?" "Yes, madame," he replied, "I could not do less for the man who delivered me from captivity. Henceforth it shall be my pleasure to fight for you!"

In the afternoon Catherine returned to Petersburg. Her entry was triumphant. The whole army accompanied her, crowned with wreaths of oak; and the applauses of the fickle populace mingled with those of the soldiery. Taking up her residence in the palace, she seemed now indeed to be firmly established upon an usurper's throne. She showed great clemency to the officers and friends of the late Emperor. Countess Vorontzof, her late rival, was alone banished a thou sand versts from St. Petersburg.

Now, for the first time, it began to appear who were the favourites of Catherine. The first marks of distinction were shown to Gregory Orlof. This fact was first detected by the vigilant eye of the Princess Dashkof. Jealousy is more penetrating than ambition. It is more watchful; it is also less discreet. The princess nearly lost the friendship of the sovereign, by her outbursts which followed the discovery.

Soon, however, a reaction in public sentiment began to appear, favourable to the dethroned Emperor. The people, who naturally pass from rage to pity or repentance, commiserated the fate of the unfortunate prince. They remembered his amiable qualities, his useful measures, and his sad and mournful reverse of fortune. What had he done to deserve so hard a fate? Thus it is in all ages and nations; the popular will is ever the tool of passion and prejudice, never the instrument of calm, enlightened reflection. They are led by the superficial appearance of things, never by any philosophical insight into their real nature. They rashly perpetrate to-day what their fury suggests; they are as easily repentant to-morrow at the sight of the mischief they have done. Had Peter III., even then, possessed a resolute leader, the populace would have easily placed him upon the throne, as, three days before, they had dragged him down.

Catherine and her friends were not ignorant of the dangerous state of public opinion. They saw the necessity of going

a step further than they had at first perhaps intended. Extreme measures must be adopted. While the exiled, injured Emperor lived, so long Catherine would tremble on her insecure throne. It was decreed in her secret councils, that her husband must perish. In furtherance of this purpose, Peter was secretly removed to Ropscha. Even there he was blind to the unhappy fate which awaited him. The castle to which he had been removed was now to become the scene of one of the most detestable and hateful murders recorded on the bloody page of human history. He had sent to his wife, beseeching that his dog, his servant, his violin, and some romances, might be sent him, to alleviate his solitude He also declared that he would henceforth retire from the world and devote himself to philosophy. Not one of these simple requests was complied with; and his projected plans of wisdom and reform were turned into ridicule.

Six days had Peter been at Ropscha, when Alexius Orlof and Teplof came to him with the news of speedy deliverance, and asked permission to dine with him. The last hour of the unhappy man had come, and he was now to endure the horrors of a cruel and violent death. The last blood of Peter the Great was about to become extinct, by the inglorious hand of secret assassination. The request of the officers was cheerfully complied with. At table, while Teplof engaged the attention of the Czar, Orlof dropped a poison into the cup of the Prince,

the virulence of which was so great, that the most cruel and excruciating pains immediately followed. The terrified Peter at once suspected the horrid truth, and gave way to his agony with groans and tears. He called for milk, but the heartless conspirators offered him another poisoned glass. He refused it. At this moment one of his servants entering the apartment, Peter threw himself into his arms, and cried out that it was not enough to prevent him from reigning and to deprive him of his crown; they must also destroy him. The servant attempted to intercede for his master, when the conspirators rudely ejected him from the apartment. Then Alexius Orlof, a man of powerful frame, threw the Emperor violently upon the floor; placed his two knees upon his breast; and grasped his throat firmly with his two hands. The unhappy monarch, screaming with terror and agony, struggled with the strength which despair alone can give. The other conspirator then hastily placed a napkin, with a running knot, around his neck, and the exertions of the two assassins ended his struggles and his life, by strangulation. Such was the unhappy end of him, who, six months before, had inherited the most majestic empire on the earth; who had seemed to be born to a long, a happy, and an illustrious career. The assassination of Peter was one of those scenes of violence and cruelty which so often occur in the dark and bloody annals of feudal times; when force and brutal vengeance governed the destiny of men, and

asserted their terrible supremacy, not only over the down-trodden serf and the feudal baron; but even sometimes assailed the majesty of kings, and made them the victims of its all-conquering and irresistible power.

CHAPTER V.

PETER'S PRIVATE FUNERAL.—CATHERINE RECOGNISED AS EMPRESS BY THE EUROPEAN POWERS.—DIFFICULTY WITH THE PRINCESS DASHKOF.—CATHERINE DISPLAYS HER STATESMANSHIP.—CONFIRMS THE ABOLITION OF THE SECRET INQUISITION.—IMMENSE ADVANTAGES OFFERED BY HER TO IMMIGRATION.—PROJECT OF MARRYING HER FAVOURITE, ORLOF.—CONSPIRACY TO ASSASSINATE HIM.—AFFAIRS OF POLAND.—CATHERINE SUCCEEDS IN PLACING PONIATOSKY ON THE POLISH THRONE.—HER TOUR TO COURLAND AND ESTHONIA.—CONSPIRACY OF MIROVITCH.—ITS FAILURE.—DEATH OF IVAN III.—PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND QUALITIES OF IVAN.—TRIAL AND PUNISHMENT OF MIROVITCH AND HIS ASSOCIATES.

Upon the perpetration of the horrid murder of Peter, Gregory Orlof immediately mounted his horse, and hastened to inform the Empress of what had occurred. She received the news with a tranquil air. She dined that day in public with her court, and in the evening gave a splendid entertainment. The body of the unhappy monarch was brought to St. Petersburg, and exposed for three days in the Monastery of St. Alexander. Peter's body lay in an open coffin, dressed in his Holstein uniform, and all ranks were admitted to kiss his hands and lips. His face had turned quite black, and the

poison which he had swallowed was so powerful, that all those who had the courage to lay their mouths to his, came away with swelled lips. His remains were deposited near those of the deposed regent Anne, the mother of the dethroned Ivan; but the place of his sepulture was honoured with neither inscription nor monument.

After the sad obsequies were over, the banished Chancellor Bestuchef was recalled. Many other persons who had fallen under the displeasure of Peter, were restored to their lost dignities and fortunes. There was a general resurrection at St. Petersburg, where a multitude of persons, who had been long separated from their families, and forgotten by the world, again reappeared among living men, and to a generation among whom they were strangers.

Although Catherine had secured the throne by such questionable means, yet her accession was acknowledged by the principal powers of Europe. But she had much more to fear from the disaffection of her own subjects, than from foreign interference or aggression. She determined upon a visit to Moscow, to quiet dissensions there, and crush the nascent spirit of revolt. She left St. Petersburg under the supreme control of Alexius Orlof, and chose as her attendants on the journey, Gregory Orlof, the old Chancellor Bestuchef, and all his courtiers who had shown themselves most devoted to her service. She and her cavalcade were received in Moscow

without any displays of popular enthusiasm. She however repaired to the chapel of the Czars, where she bestowed her caresses on the Archbishop and his suffragans, and was crowned in the presence of the soldiers and the people. After a very short stay, and concealing as best she could her chagrin, she returned hastily to St. Petersburg.

One of the difficulties of her situation now was, to release herself from the control of some of those, by whose aid she had reached the throne, and who now began to assert their claims to dictation. Of these, the most troublesome was the Princess Dashkof. She demanded, among other things, the title of Colonel in the guards—a request which Catherine resolved to refuse. The princess, mortified at the denial, gave vent to her feelings. She immediately received orders to retire to Moscow. Each day the favourite Orlof obtained more influence over the Empress. She found in him, not only the essential merits of a lover, but also the best qualities of a statesman. She felt toward him, not only the tenderness of affection; she entertained also the sentiment of gratitude. His dizzy elevation created him many enemies; but none of their malicious representations affected his position with Catherine; and even afterward, when the ardour of her passion had been satiated by long indulgence, and had sought other and younger objects of gratification, she cherished the friendship

of Orlof, and ever accorded to him her confidence and approbation.

We have now reached that period in the history of this great Empress, when she began to display those talents for statesmanship upon which rests the glorious monument of her fame. Hitherto, we have seen her only in passages of love, or of adventure; we may now contemplate her in a higher sphere than even a political aspirant;—as a sovereign, and as administrator of the interests of a vast and complicated empire. She now applied herself to the advancement of commerce. She made appropriations to augment the marine. She appointed commissions to examine into the finances of the empire. She reduced many of the expenses of the government. She met her ministers regularly and punctually, and attended with assiduity to the despatch of business. She held frequent conferences with Marshal Munich, and the Chancellor Bestuchef. With the former, she discussed projects of extending her empire by military aggressions; with the latter she studied the politics and resources of the various courts and kingdoms of Europe, their weaknesses and their advantages By an ukase dated Oct. 13th, 1762, she confirmed the abolition of the secret inquisition chancery, which the ill-fated Peter had abolished, and for which, his memory was cherished with gratitude by the nation. She declared by an ukase, that foreign colonists should find welcome and support in her do-

minions. The consequence of this was, that vast multitudes of the most valuable citizens of Germany and other countries migrated to Russia, and became among the most valuable of her subjects. She designated what districts were best adapted for agriculture, and where the most desirable locations existed for commerce and manufactures. She exempted strangers from all services, either civil or military; even from all taxes and imposts for a certain time—such as for five years in the large cities, for ten years in the inland towns, and for thirty years in the rural districts. She proclaimed the equal toleration of all religions.

The consequence of these wise regulations was, that thousands of foreigners flocked to Russia, as to the Promised Land. Scenes similar to those which have in modern times been witnessed, of adventures in multitudes hastening from American seaports to the modern Ophir, were exhibited in all the maritime towns of Germany. Whole families of men, women, and children, literati, professors, artificers, mechanics, soldiers, adventurers, and vagabonds of every name and grade, were crowding to the land where such favourable offers were made to promote the interests of the stranger.

The administration of the fortunate Empress now moved on with harmony and success. At peace with foreign nations, order and quiet reigning within her own dominions, except some few irregularities which were easily crushed, she had

leisure to turn her thoughts to other, and perhaps more agreeable enterprises.

In 1763 everything seemed to concur in promoting the fortunes of her favourite Orlof. She no longer concealed her preference for him from the public eye. The aged Bestuchef, observing the state of affairs, determined to propose to Catherine the elevation of Orlof to the throne by her marriage with him. The proposal at once aroused Orlof's highest ambition. He embraced Bestuchef with transport, and promised a compliance with all he wished. But alas! for the vanity of human hopes: as soon as Bestuchef proposed the arrangement to Catherine, she declined the proposal on the ground that it was surrounded with so many difficulties, that it could not be accomplished without giving just offence to the empire. Bestuchef was not discouraged. He drew up a petition, which was signed by the principal dignitaries of the empire, beseeching her that, as the health of her son Paul was delicate, she would sacrifice her liberty for the good of her empire, and choose from among her subjects, the one most worthy to share her affections and her throne. Had it not been for the dexterity of Count Panin, Orlof had become Emperor of all the Russias; for Catherine was about yielding to a proposal which was more agreeable to affection than to policy, and acquiesce in the measure. It was only the urgent and solemn supplications of Panin, and of the Hetman Razumosky, against elevating to

the throne an untitled and irresponsible adventurer, who, when absolute power was within his reach, might commit unknown excesses,—that induced her to see the really dangerous nature of the project, and to renounce it.

Meanwhile, news had spread abroad of the contemplated elevation of Orlof, and a conspiracy of a formidable character was immediately set on foot against him. One of these was near succeeding. A night guard stood at Orlof's door, and one at that of the Empress. One of these had been bribed to open Orlof's apartment to three conspirators. He was saved by a mistake in the hour; for when the conspirators approached, the confederate had been relieved by another The latter, astounded at seeing three men seeking admission to Orlof's apartment at that hour of the night, gave the alarm —but the conspirators had escaped.

This event occurred at Moscow. Filled with apprehension, Catherine immediately returned to St. Petersburg. She arrived on the anniversary of her elevation to the throne. Even there, rumours of conspiracies against her were now numerous and threatening. Public report even accused Count Panin and his brother, and the Hetman Razumosky, of being among the conspirators. Catherine, astounded at these reports, was on the point of having them arrested. She concluded, however, to try the force of artifice, and first to employ quieter means, so as if possible not to alienate those powerful persons,

should the report of their unfaithfulness prove untrue. She knew that the Princess Dashkof must be in the confidence of the conspirators, whoever they were, inasmuch as she had been treated coldly by the Empress since her elevation. She wrote a long and affectionate letter to her, pretending regret for their existing coldness. She praised the services and attachment of her former friend, and proposed to readmit her to her confidence. She besought the princess to reveal what she knew of the existing conspiracies. To a long letter of four pages, the Empress received a reply of four lines, containing these words: "Madame, I have heard nothing; but if I had heard anything, I should take good care how I spoke of it! What is it you require of me? That I should expire on the scaffold? I am ready to mount it!" Catherine, foiled in this attempt, was more successful elsewhere. Some of the conspirators were discovered, and banished to Siberia. Panin and Razumosky were found innocent, and were reinstated in her favour.

It became necessary for Catherine now to turn her attention from the internal affairs of her own kingdom, to those of a foreign state. Poland, for so many ages distinguished for the chivalry and high spirit of her people, has been equally remarkable for the sufferings and misfortunes which they have endured from the defects of her constitution. In 1763, Augustus III. was fast approaching his grave; and it became

a vital question in the politics of Europe, who was to be his successor upon that elective throne. Catherine determined to elevate her former favourite, Count Poniatosky, to that high dignity, influenced, doubtless, by a twofold feeling: first, the memory of their former attachment, and secondly, the consciousness that such an arrangement would promote her political interests. By the charter of that country, the crown was made elective, and the proviso was added, that the king should never appoint a successor during his lifetime. The General Diet was to be assembled every year. Every nobleman in Poland had the right to vote at the election of a king; and if the king infringed the laws, and invaded the privileges of the nobles, the nation was absolved from its allegiance.

There existed in the Polish constitution, an anomaly, such as is to be found in no other government, ancient or modern. This was the privilege possessed by each nobleman, singly to put an end to the deliberations of a whole diet by his vote, his *liberum veto;* a right which was the source, as might be expected, of infinite injury and misfortune to the nation, and in itself the most absurd and despicable, of which the mind can conceive.

Augustus III. died Oct. 5th, 1763. Catherine had obtained the assurances of the courts of Vienna and Versailles, that they would not interfere in the affairs of Poland. When it became known in Warsaw, that Poniatosky was to be elevated

to the vacant throne, universal discontent prevailed, that so young and so low-born a person, should be promoted to so high a dignity. As obstacles arose against her purpose, the resolution of Catherine also increased, and she was determined not to be thwarted in her intention, if we may judge from the tone of her letter to her minister in Warsaw. To him she says: "My dear Count, remember my candidate. I write this to you at two o'clock in the morning; judge whether I am in different about the affair."* At length the diet opened upon the plain of Vola, three miles from Warsaw. It began by a solemn mass and a sermon.† Forty-five nuncios protested against the presence of Catherine's troops. Count Branitchky whose name was at the head of the protest, retired from the diet. So high did hostilities run between the troops of the rival parties, that an engagement actually occurred between them, in which the Poles were routed, and the Russians triumphed. Overawed by the presence of the victorious army, the diet at length proceeded to a final ballot, and Count Poniatosky was duly elected. The next day he was proclaimed

* "*Mon cher comte, souvenez-vous de mon candidat. Je vous écris ceci deux heures après minuit: jugez si la chose m'est indifférente!*" The letter containing this acknowledgment had been intercepted.

† The text is said to have been 2d Kings 10, 3: *Eligite ex vobis meliorem, qui vobis placuerit, et posuite eum super solium.*

King of Poland, and Grand Duke of Lithuania, under the title of Stanislaus Augustus.

The Empress, having triumphed in this enterprise, resolved to take a tour to Esthonia and Courland. On her departure, she left St. Petersburg under the command of Count Panin. During her absence occurred a conspiracy against her throne and authority, the object of which was to elevate the dethroned Ivan in her stead. Since 1745 he had been in close confinement in the fortress of Schlusselberg. In a subterranean vault, where no ray of heaven's light ever visited him, with a lamp constantly burning, the unhappy prince whiled away the tedious and hopeless hours of his existence. He knew no difference between night and day. No clock ever tolled out to him the sluggish progress of the hours. He was attended by two soldiers, whose orders were, never to utter a word in his hearing. He was now twenty-four years of age. His figure was graceful, and his manners pleasing. In an interview which the Empress Elizabeth once held with him, these qualities of the unhappy Prince had moved even her heart to tears. Peter III. had held frequent interviews with him, and was so convinced of his capacity, that he had determined to proclaim him his heir and successor, to the prejudice of his reputed son. The soldiers who guarded him, had orders to the effect, that should an attempt ever be made to release him,

they would be held answerable with their lives for his death They were ordered instantly to destroy him.

During Catherine's absence, a soldier of the Smolensk regiment, named Mirovitch, conceived the daring purpose of liberating Prince Ivan, and proclaiming him Emperor. Being stationed in the fortress, he had facilities for carrying his purpose into effect. He soon obtained the sworn co-operation of some of his disaffected fellow-soldiers; as many as he supposed necessary for his purpose. He pretended to have an order from Petersburg for the release of the Prince. On the day appointed for carrying out the enterprise of the conspirators. Mirovitch first attacked and secured the Governor of the castle. He next prepared to batter open the door of the Prince's dungeon, having brought a piece of artillery from the ramparts; but at that moment the door of Ivan's prison opened, and he entered with his soldiers. A sad sight then met their view. The keepers of the Prince, in accordance with their strict orders, had executed their bloody commission. The noise outside of his prison, had awaked the unhappy Ivan, and hearing the threats of his guards, he had conjured them to spare his miserable life. They paid no regard to his requests; and although he was naked, he resisted their assaults with desperation, and defended himself for a considerable time. Having his right hand pierced through, and his body wounded in various places, he seized the sword of one of the assassins, and

broke it; and while he was struggling to get the piece out of his hand, the other stabbed him in the side, and threw him down. They then despatched him with their bayonets. The bleeding and mangled body of the murdered youth lay on the ground before Mirovitch, when he entered the apartment. Struck with horror at the sight, he threw himself on the body and exclaimed, "I have missed my aim, I have nothing now to do but to die." He immediately surrendered himself. Ivan was full six feet high, of handsome figure, and fair complexion. His body was wrapped up in a sheepskin, put into a coffin, and buried without ceremony. Immediately upon her return to Petersburg from Riga, where she then was, Catherine ordered the trial of Mirovitch and his accomplices. They were condemned; he to death, and they to banishment to Siberia. The sentence was immediately executed; and thus another of the various conspiracies which had been formed against this Empress was destroyed and crushed, thereby adding an additional instance to the many which had already occurred, in which she enjoyed the most remarkable good fortune, and triumphed over repeated perils and dangers.

Much mystery overhung this affair at the time of its occurrence. Many intelligent persons were of opinion that the chief conspirator was in the pay of the Russian sovereign; who resolved by his means to rid herself of a person who might one day become the head of a dangerous rebellion,

and put in peril the security of her throne. It was asserted, that Mirovitch himself declared, before his death, that such had been the case; and that he indulged the certain hope of pardon even when he ascended the scaffold. His reckless indifference to his dreadful fate, was supposed to be a convincing proof that, up to the moment of his execution, he expected to escape the rigour of the law, and even to be rewarded for his villany. His hopes, if he entertained any, were destined to a sad disappointment. The two officers, however, who had guarded the prince, and who had fulfilled their orders with such fatal determination, were afterwards promoted in the service and received liberal rewards from their sovereign.

CHAPTER VI.

CATHERINE PROMOTES THE INTERESTS OF SCIENCE AND LITERATURE.—CORRESPONDENCE WITH DIDEROT.—AFFAIRS OF GALLANTRY IN HER COURT.—SPLENDID FEATS AND EXHIBITIONS AT ST. PETERSBURG.—SHE REFORMS THE COMPLICATED JURISPRUDENCE OF RUSSIA.—HER COURT BECOMES THE ASYLUM OF DISTINGUISHED MEN OF LETTERS.—PARTITION OF POLAND.—PRINCE HENRY OF PRUSSIA.—HE VISITS CATHERINE.—HER FIRST INVASION OF THE TURKISH DOMINIONS.—ROMANTZOF.—HE VANQUISHES THE TURKISH ARMY.—BATTLE OF KAGUL.—CONSPIRACY AGAINST PONIATOSKY, NOW KING OF POLAND.—ITS FAILURE.—ORLOF'S DISMISSAL AS IMPERIAL FAVOURITE.—VASSILTCHIKOF BECOMES FAVOURITE.

THE comprehensive mind of Catherine was not confined in its activity, to the political interests which demanded her attention, or even to the cares of her personal safety. She promoted the interests of literature and science, and became the ardent patron of these noblest pursuits of man. She herself corresponded with Voltaire and D'Alembert. She invited the latter to assume the place of tutor to the Grand Duke, her son. She tendered him a munificent salary of twenty-five thousand livres. She assured him that he should have all necessary facilities for completing the Encyclopedia at St. Petersburg. To Diderot she also made the most liberal offers.

She purchased his library at an enormous price. She allowed him to retain it in his possession, and gave him a salary as her librarian. She presented to Morand, a distinguished surgeon of the day, a collection of gold and silver medals, as a testimony of the satisfaction which she felt at receiving the surgical instruments which he had purchased for her. To almost all the men of letters at Paris, she sent some testimonials of her regard; who, in return, proclaimed her virtues to the world, and represented her in glowing colours as the ornament and the glory of the age.

She pretended also to be the patron of virtue and of rigid morals; as if the world was unacquainted with the immense and vicious license which she allowed herself in reference to such matters. An affair of gallantry occurring at this time between the British Minister and one of her maids of honour, she dismissed the latter from the court, and forbade the former to appear there for some time. Two of her ladies being at a masquerade, were talking rather loudly concerning one of their admirers. The Empress went up to them, and with a stern voice, ordered them to leave the ball-room, since they knew no better how to preserve decorum in her presence!

She next purchased the admiration of the inhabitants of St. Petersburg by the exhibition of splendid tournaments and other festivals. The Russian courtiers, arrayed in the armour of the Middle Ages, displayed their magnificence and gallantry,

their feats of strength and dexterity. An amphitheatre was erected on the occasion. In the centre of the arena was a throne, occupied by the judge of the performances, surrounded by forty of his officers and heralds. The ladies of the court jousted at these tournaments, as well as the chevaliers. They were divided into four quadrilles, representing four different nations; Russians, Turks, Indians, and Romans, and were arrayed in splendid armour, according to the costumes of their respective communities. The Romans, led on by the gallant Count Orlof, the imperial favourite, were magnificent and brilliant beyond description. The aged and chivalrous Marshal Munich was appointed grand judge of the field, and decreed the prizes. Countess Butterlin, the sister of the Princesses Dashkof and of Vorontzof, the former mistress of Peter III., was the principal and most gallant victor; her prize was valued at five thousand rubles. The venerable Marshal, in decreeing the premium, made a gallant address to the fair recipient. He alluded to the memorable fact that he had passed sixty-five years in military service. He had often led on mighty armies to glory and victory. He had seen and experienced the utmost vicissitudes of human fortune. He was the relic of another and a buried generation; and was the oldest in rank, as well as in years, of all the generals in Europe. But the honour of presiding on that occasion, and of extending to her fair hand the prize

she had so nobly won, was the crowning honour of all his toils, his vicissitudes, and his triumphs.

The immense company then sat down to a splendid banquet. The imperial gardens were illuminated; the walks lighted with numerous arches of lamps, delicious fountains, and magnificent fire-works. These festivities lasted during many days and nights.

The Empress also directed her attention to more serious departments of executive duty. The jurisprudence of Russia had become the most monstrous and confused mass, which perhaps existed in any country. It was full of intricacy, confusion, and contradiction. She resolved to reform this mighty curse. She divided the Senate into colleges, each having its separate line of duty, and set them to revise and classify the chaotic elements. She did more. She proceeded to the preparation of a new code. The instructions to guide these compilers were of great length and elaborateness, and were drawn up in Catherine's own handwriting, and still remain deposited in the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg. When, after long-continued labours, the assembly had completed their work, and were about to separate, they voted to her by general acclamation, the honourable titles of the Great, the Wise, the Mother of the Country. She made a present to each deputy of a gold medal, in order to transmit to posterity the purpose which had called them together, and the

successful completion of their honourable task. She immediately sent copies of the work to the principal sovereigns of Europe. Among the complimentary replies which she received was one from Frederic of Prussia, in which he said: "No woman has hitherto been a legislatrix. That glory was reserved for you, who so well deserve it."

The brilliant court of Catherine now became the asylum of distinguished men of letters, from various countries of Europe. Among these was the celebrated Professor Euler, from Berlin. She encouraged artists and scholars of every grade. She gave new privileges to the Academy of Sciences, and increased its lustre by adding the names of many illustrious foreigners by election. A new era in literature and science, as well as in government, had shed its genial light over the vast dominions of the northern Autocrat. It was a light which owed its reflected splendour to the brilliant supremacy of one master mind alone.

The partition of Poland was a measure which originated with Catherine, and she had long corresponded with Frederic of Prussia respecting it. It would have been suspicious to the other powers of Europe had they held a public conference to arrange the necessary preliminaries. Prince Henry of Prussia was therefore sent to St. Petersburg for the purpose of arranging this culpable enterprise. In 1770 he arrived in the Russian capital, and was received with discharge of cannon

and other demonstrations of honour and welcome. He presented himself at court with a numerous suite, and dined in public with the Empress. Each day was marked with some new festivity and entertainment. The most magnificent of these was given at the summer residence of the Empress, beautifully situated at the distance of twenty-four versts from St. Petersburg. At the approach of night, the Empress, the Grand Duke, Prince Henry, and the principal persons of the court, repaired to this palace in an immense sledge drawn by sixteen horses, covered and enclosed by double glasses. The interior of the palace was illumined with innumerable wax lights. After a grand discharge of cannon, the lights were extinguished, and the grounds were made resplendent with fireworks the whole length of the palace. After these were ended, the ball began, and the supper and dances continued till a late hour in the morning.

It is curious to observe, by what subtle reasoning these royal robbers justified their aggressions upon the kingdom of Poland. A manifesto was issued at Warsaw, by the Russian and Prussian ministers, in the name of their respective sovereigns, which was confirmed a few days after by the minister of Catherine, in which they set forth the intentions of their respective sovereigns. Catherine declared, in her specifications, that the Count de Pergen was appointed her commissary, plenipotentiary, and governor, in the provinces claimed

by her; the people were commanded to pay ready and full obedience to all that he should command; and engaging her protection to all who were obedient to her commands, she solemnly promised to all her new subjects, the full and free exercise of their religion, the enjoyment of their property, rights, and privileges; and that if the nobility and landholders did not choose to yield to her demands, she gave them three months to dispose of their property, and leave her territories

But the most specious logic is used by the King of Prussia in defence of his part in this memorable robbery. He declares that the Kings of Poland, many ages since, violently dispossessed the Dukes of Pomerania of that part of their duchy called Pomerellia; that in the same way, they had usurped a large part of the Newmark, situated on the river Noltee; that the Dukes of Stettin were the natural heirs of the defunct Dukes of Dantzic; that the latter line becoming extinct in A D. 1295, their territory became the property of the Knights of the Teutonic Order, from whom they passed into the hands of the Kings of Poland; by all which means the house of Stettin was deprived of its rights, and that the house of Brandenburg were the sole and certain heirs of the house of Stettin. The acute Frederic added, that the Dukes of Stettin had never renounced their rights to Pomerellia; to which true assertion of the King it was shrewdly answered, that such a renunciation never took place, for a very excellent reason

because those Dukes never possessed nor even claimed such rights, until they were asserted by the King of Prussia.

It was thus, by going back into remote and obscure ages, the records of which were long since lost, and pretending to turn over the dusty tomes of antiquarian lore, that the cunning Prince presumed that he could assert some show of justice and of right for the share which he took of the unholy spoils of Poland. But neither his efforts, nor the protestations of his royal associates in that memorable act of plunder, can ever wipe away the blot of infamy which rests upon their memory, in rudely tearing asunder one of the most valiant and honourable nations that ever existed.

It was in their private interviews that the princes planned the destruction of the gallant land of John Sobieski. The dismemberment of this kingdom, which afterwards took place, was in furtherance of the arrangements there made, and the compacts there entered into.

At this period, however, Catherine turned her immediate energies for conquest, toward the Turkish dominions. A squadron of Russian men-of-war sailed from Archangel, and steered their hitherto unattempted course toward the Mediterranean. The fleet consisted of twenty-five sail of the line. They were under the supreme command of Alexius Orlof, who had been raised to the dignity of Admiral. All Europe was astonished, to see a nation hitherto unknown in the annals

of naval warfare and conquest, send forth an expedition so important and so adventurous. Catherine sent a large land force to co-operate with the navy, under the command of Count Romantzof. The Russians opened the campaign by the siege of Bender, the place celebrated as the long retreat of Charles XII. Two signal victories gained by the Russians, decided the campaign. The Turks, to the number of eighty thousand men, commanded by the Khan of the Crimea, were vanquished on the borders of the Pruth. The beaten side retreated toward the Danube, where they were reinforced by an immense army, led on by the Grand Vizier. Romantzof found himself in the presence of a hundred and fifty thousand Turks; and his situation was the more desperate, as he had detached a portion of his own troops for the protection of a convoy which was approaching.

The enemy, aware of the situation of the Russian general, spread out his line far to the left of the Russian army, encompassing it in such a manner as to render retreat impossible. The latter numbered only eighteen thousand men. During the night, the Turks surrounded their camp with a triple intrenchment. The same interval was employed by the Russian general in making the utmost preparations for the ensuing struggle. Placed in the most perilous situation, with inevitable defeat and destruction staring him in the face, he was yet undaunted and undismayed. He gave his orders with

calmness and self-possession. He exhorted his troops to victory or death. He held out to his officers the brilliant rewards which would recompense valour and heroism, at the hands of their munificent Empress. He encouraged them with the assurance that this one battle gained, would end the war, and secure them a permanent and glorious triumph.

When the morning dawned, the haughty Mussulmans beheld the Russian forces in glittering armour and perfect order, drawn out in battle array. The Grand Vizier gave the signal of battle. The Russians were attacked on all sides at once. The fury of the conflict raged for five hours; and as yet no decided advantage had been gained by either party. At length the Russian general, fearing that the vast artillery of the Turks would complete the ruin of his entire army, ordered the whole line to charge with fixed bayonets. The onslaught of the desperate Russians was terrible; its effect was irresistible. They drove the Turks within their intrenchments, where they defended themselves with courage. But their undisciplined valour at length gave way to the skill and resolute attacks of the Russians, and their defeat was total and complete. The Grand Vizier himself gave the signal for retreat, leaving one-third of his army on the field of battle. The greater part of his baggage, and of his stores, together with one hundred and forty pieces of cannon, and seven thousand wagons laden with provisions, became the booty of the victorious Russians. This

great victory was obtained at Kagul, in the month of July, 1770.

The news of these signal successes filled Catherine with pride and pleasure; while they also served to seat her more securely on her throne. The disaffected dared no longer conspire against a Princess who was so triumphant at home and abroad; in the cabinet and in the field; who was so great in statesmanship, and so fortunate in arms. The public rejoicings at St. Petersburg were great. Magnificent festivities were given to celebrate the victories won; and the Empress caused the foundations of a palace to be laid, to commemorate these glorious events. In 1771, Count Alexius Orlof returned to the Russian capital to enjoy the reward of his toils. He was honourably received, and was decorated with the grand riband of St. George. After spending some time at St. Petersburg, he proceeded to return to the seat of the war in the Archipelago. He stopped on his way at Vienna, and there on several occasions displayed the fierceness and brutality for which he was remarkable. One evening at supper at the Russian ambassador's hotel, he openly detailed the horrid incidents connected with the murder of Peter III., which had never before been repeated by any of the eye-witnesses to that dreadful scene. When at Rome, and at supper with a large and elegant company, he determined to display his extraordinary strength. With ease he broke in his hand several pieces of

crystal and iron. He then took between his thumb and finger an apple, which he crushed with such violence, that one of the pieces struck a royal duke who was present, in the face, and seriously hurt him. Every one present was much affected at the accident. Orlof alone looked on with perfect silence and indifference. This was the man whose powerful frame had crushed to death the feeble person of the unfortunate Peter III.

The Poles had never taken kindly the Russian interference which had placed Poniatosky, the former lover and favourite of Catherine, upon their throne. A dangerous conspiracy was now hatched, to deprive him of his life, and to release Poland from the usurper. The conspirators were headed by a nobleman named Pulausky, a man of great intrepidity, and passionately devoted to the cause of Polish independence. He resolved to get possession of the King's person. After swearing in the most solemn manner, either to take him alive, or to put him to death, the confederates, forty-three in number, entered Warsaw by different routes. They there ascertained that the King was to spend the ensuing evening at his uncle's, Prince Czartorinsky. About ten o'clock at night the King was returning to his palace, when suddenly the conspirators advanced, and bade the coachman stop. One of the attendants was wounded by a pistol shot, and expired shortly afterward. The rest of the King's suite took to flight, leaving him alone, and at the mercy of the assassins. They took him by the

collar, and dragged him between their horses along the darkest streets of his capital. Perceiving that his strength was failing him, and that he could no longer run on foot, they compelled him to mount one of their horses. Coming to the moat which surrounds Warsaw, they forced him to take the leap with them. The horse upon which he rode fell, and broke his leg, and the monarch's foot was crushed. They then compelled him to mount another horse. At this crisis, the conspirators unaccountably dispersed, leaving the King in charge of but seven of their number, under the orders of Kosiusky These wandered about a long time with him in the dark forest by which they were surrounded. Soon after they found themselves but one league from Warsaw, being confounded by the intricacy of the forest paths. The voices of the Russian patrols were heard. The conspirators were frightened and fled. The king remained alone with Kosiusky. Then it was, that the captive monarch tried the effect of persuasion on his keeper. Kosiusky hesitated. He feared to break his oath. At length, upon receiving assurances of pardon, he conducted the King to a forest mill which stood at no great distance. Thence he sent a letter by a peasant, to the colonel of his guards, who in great haste came and delivered the King from his perilous position.

Meanwhile the King's hat had been picked up, covered with blood. The report of his assassination immediately spread, and Warsaw was in the utmost consternation. Some of the

conspirators were afterward taken and executed. Kosiusky obtained his pardon, and afterward retired to Italy, where Poniatosky settled a pension upon him.

While this perilous adventure was happening at Warsaw to Catherine's former favourite, the vicissitudes of love and fortune were making changes among those who had succeeded him in her affections at Petersburg. The Empress was still much attached to Gregory Orlof. He on the contrary never felt any true affection for her, and his conduct was governed only by gratitude and ambition. He became cool in his attachment, after having possessed for years "the richest morsel of the earth," and declined in his assiduities. Catherine even detected him in some of his infidelities. It was not in woman's heart to forgive so great a dereliction of honour and duty. She herself became indifferent to the man who, as lover, had betrayed her, though he was still faithful to her as a subject.

But to love, was now an irresistible necessity of the warm-hearted Empress, and it was requisite for her to have a substitute. The Chancellor Panin had discovered that Catherine often viewed with apparent pleasure a handsome lieutenant in the guards, named Vassiltchikof. An interview was arranged between them. The new aspirant pleased, because he was young and handsome. But he was deficient in talents, in

experience, and in boldness. For the present, the Empress was satisfied with him, and Orlof seemed permanently removed from her person, and excluded from her affections. He soon received intelligence of the successor who had usurped his place, and immediately repaired to St. Petersburg. She gave orders that he should be excluded from her presence, and her apartments were carefully and doubly guarded. Then was given an exhibition of the baseness and degradation of human nature. As soon as it was known that the once powerful Orlof was in disgrace, the crouching sycophants, who before had crawled around his path, now stepped boldly forth to facilitate his ruin. Orlof, like all noble natures under similar circumstances, was undaunted, and felt only contempt for the despicable wretches who exulted in, and promoted his downfall. His courage remained unshaken. He refused to resign his respective offices about the Court. The consequence was, that he inspired his former mistress with admiration for his intrepidity; and she acceded to his request that he might retain all his offices, titles, and dignities, and enter upon his travels honoured with the most magnificent presents, and testimonials of her esteem and friendship. He displayed throughout his journey the utmost pomp. He appeared at the court of Versailles in a coat, all the buttons of which were large diamonds. At Spa, he eclipsed in grandeur, even the displays of the Duke of Orleans, at a later period

termed Egalité; and played for such high stakes, as terrified the most daring and opulent adventurers. He lavished his wealth as became the lover and favourite of the mighty autocrat of all the Russias.

CHAPTER VII.

DREADFUL SCOURGE WHICH RAVAGED RUSSIA DURING 1771.—ITS DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS AT MOSCOW.—POPULAR FANATICISM.—MEASURES OF RELIEF TAKEN BY CATHERINE.—CONDUCT OF ORLOF.—MURDER OF ARCHBISHOP AMBROSE.—DECISIVE CONDUCT OF YERAPKIN, THE COMMANDANT.—CATHERINE'S TREATMENT OF THE PRINCESS TARRAKANNOF.—INTRIGUE OF ALEXIUS ORLOF.—HER UNHAPPY FATE.—JOURNEY OF THE GRAND DUKE OF RUSSIA TO THE COURT OF BERLIN.—HIS ENGAGEMENT TO THE PRINCESS OF HESSE-DARMSTADT.—HIS RETURN TO ST. PETERSBURG.

WHILE Catherine was engaged in these transactions, and was amusing herself with pleasures, her subjects were suffering under the fatal power of a scourge, from which no human skill could protect them. In the year 1771, the plague ravaged the fairest portions of the interior of Russia; and thousands fell victims to its terrible effects. The ignorance of the physicians at Moscow, and the superstition of the people, increased its destructive fury. At first, the physicians mistook the disease for an epidemical fever, and the populace, when they discovered the inability of the professors of the healing art to relieve their sufferings, and rescue them from death, became enraged, and pursued them everywhere with fury. It is well

known, that Turkey has long been the nest and birth-place of this disease. The peculiar habits of the Turks, and their want of attention to cleanliness, have been the prolific origin and cause of its existence. The army of Catherine, after defeating the Turks, in 1770, when they entered the towns and villages of the vanquished people, were met by an enemy more terrible than any human foe, in the shape of this disease. They brought it with them when they returned home; where the folly of their generals contributed to render the case still more desperate. General Stofeln, at Yaffy, where the pestilence raged with unusual power, issued orders that its name should not even be pronounced; and compelled the attending physicians to draw up a statement in writing, declaring that it was only a spotted fever. The men fell dead upon the road in heaps. Thousands of them were thus carried off, and the citizens fled from their houses, and took refuge in the solitude of the forests. The havoc at length reached the general's own people, and he himself perished among its victims. The desertion of Yaffy was the only remedy for the ruin which seemed to impend over the whole army. So great had been the devastation among the troops, that two regiments and one battalion amounted together only to four hundred men. The baggage, which had been all packed up during the time of the plague, was brought out and opened, that the soldiers, who had served the summer campaign in their waistcoats alone, might

have their coats during winter. The clothes were so infected, that the people who were employed to take them out, were immediately attacked with mortal ulcers. The free intercourse at the markets and churches now spread the contagion everywhere. The soldiers robbed the infected houses of the dead; thus increasing the spread of the disease. The commandant himself was negligent of his duty; the houses were not fumigated and ventilated; and he displayed the worst weaknesses of humanity, in ordering chests of linen and other goods to be brought from the houses of the dead, and stowed away in his own cellars. Superstition added its horrors to the universal desolation. There was a captive Turk in the army, who pretended to be able to cure the disease by incantations. Thousands flocked around him. He wrote tickets containing these words in Arabic: *O great Mohammed, have pity for this once on these dogs of Christians, for the sake of our deliverance from captivity; and free them soon from the pestilence!*" The commandant caused this writing to be stuck on poles, upon the belfries of the Christian churches; and the infatuated people, confiding in the absurd mockery, neglected the proper means of remedy, and imparted increased fury to the disease. Within a few months, one-fourth of the city had become victims to its ravages.

On Christmas, 1771, the pestilence reached Moscow. The first step taken by the authorities was a bad one. They issued

a proclamation asserting that the disease was not the plague. Some of the physicians and surgeons maintained the same position. The people thus neglected to take the proper precautions. But as soon as the Empress heard the real facts of the case, she immediately despatched assistance to Kief and to Moscow. The calamity in these cities was already terrible. The contagion spread through the surrounding villages and suburbs, where at least forty thousand persons perished. In Moscow the ravages of the pestilence were terrific. In a few weeks three-fourths of the inhabitants of that city had perished. The dead lay unburied in the streets where they had fallen, or where they had been thrown out from the houses, spreading an increased pestilence around them. Catherine determined to spare no exertions to stay the ravages of this curse which had now become a national one; and she sent Gregory Orlof, with extraordinary powers, to check, by all possible means, its extension. On this occasion she gave the sum of one hundred thousand rubles for that purpose. Orlof went daily to the senate, and every week an ukase was issued. He appointed a commission of health, of which the most skilful physicians were members. The monasteries, the churches, and even the palaces were turned into hospitals for the sick, and for retreats for children who had been made orphans by the disease. All physicians and surgeons, who were conspicuous for their diligence and devotion to the suffering, were handsomely

rewarded. These and other precautions were attended with the best effects. But the scientific method of curing the disease had not yet been found out. Very few of those who once caught it escaped with their lives. But these being shut up, the further progress of the pestilence was stopped. It was only the severity of winter which put an end to the disease in Moscow, and throughout the empire. At the beginning of September in this year, eight hundred persons had died each day, and this frightful number continued to prevail till December. In January, 1772, the plague disappeared from Moscow. But scenes of strange folly and excess had occurred in that city, before that desirable result had been attained. The populace had displayed instances of the greatest frenzy and stupidity. Instead of using the wise precautions which the orders of Gregory Orlof dictated to be done, they had relied principally on prayers offered to the images of the saints. In September, a crazy enthusiast of the lower class of the people, assembled a number of the rabble, and declared to them, that a picture of the Mother of God, near the Carvartskoi gate, had appeared to him; had complained of the neglect of her worship; and had promised to quell the pestilence by a miracle, if her worship was resumed. At this gate he continued to stand, and to exhort the priests and people as they passed by. So great was the popular superstition, that no one seemed to doubt the truth of the absurd assertions of the

fanatic. The faithful from every portion of the city, flocked in multitudes to the picture of the saint; they supplicated it with violent prayers and imprecations; they brought ornaments of dress to hang upon it; they made presents to it, in gold and jewels. Numerous processions were made to her shrine. Those who were sick endeavoured to press forward to the picture; and thus, by this very contact with others, served to multiply the evil a thousand fold. The primate of Moscow, the Archbishop Ambrose, a virtuous and intelligent prelate, determined to put an end to these disgraceful scenes of popular fanaticism. The commandant, at his request, gave him five soldiers. These he sent secretly, in the darkness of the night, to carry away the picture, which had been the unconscious cause of so much evil. But so constant was the attendance of the crowd before the picture, that the soldiers found it difficult to obtain access to it. They were driven off with great peril of their lives. The mob cursed the Archbishop; they declared that he was a heretic; they ran to the churches and rang the bells; they aroused the whole city, and proclaimed abroad the awful sacrilege which had been intended. The tumult, based on an ignorant and stupid excitement without any cause or intelligent ground, became universal, and threatened the life of the prelate. He managed to escape, however, and fled to the Donskoï monastery, situated a short distance out of the city. But a child, who saw him pass, ran

and told whither he had fled. The tumultuous rabble hastened to the monastery, rushed into the church, and found the Archbishop on the steps of the altar. Neither the place, nor the man, was sufficient to protect him from the amazing fury of the murderous rabble. They seized him; threw him upon the ground; beat him on the head; and at length completed his murder with their daggers. The body remained unburied until the following day, before the gate of the monastery. The multitude then ran back into the city, and commenced there the most outrageous excesses. They plundered the archiepiscopal residence. The most valuable goods they took away; the rest they destroyed. The wine cellars under the palace were entered, and plundered of their contents. The drunken rabble, now more insane than ever, next turned their fury against the physicians and surgeons, whom they imagined to have caused, or increased, the pestilence. An Italian dancing master happened to come in their way. He must needs be a physician, from his genteel appearance. They immediately broke his arms and legs, and left him lying in the street in that condition. The houses of the physicians were attacked and plundered. The crowd then proceeded to the principal hospital, from which the attendants and soldiers, amounting in all to several hundred men, escaped into the country, and thus evaded the popular fury. Things seemed to be approach-

ing a desperate crisis, and active measures were soon to be taken to save the city from total ruin.

The commandant, General Yerapkin, now determined to put down the insurrection at all hazards. He called out the troops in garrison, and paraded the city. Three hundred of the principal rioters were taken prisoners, and many were slain in the street. Vigorous measures, such as these, soon cooled the popular frenzy, abated their religious enthusiasm, and reduced them to their senses. But before this result was effected, many severe conflicts had occurred between the populace and the military. To prevent the return of the disease in the following spring, Catherine caused it to be proclaimed throughout the city, that whoever kept in concealment any goods which had been in houses infected by the disease, even though he had stolen them, if he refused to give them up, should be punished; but if he produced them, to be destroyed, he should be liberally rewarded. Gregory Orlof displayed throughout all these trying scenes, the most commendable fortitude. He took such measures as both tended to diminish the ravages of the pestilence, and also to quell the popular frenzy, which was more disgraceful than the disease had been injurious. When he returned again to Moscow, in January, 1772, he was received with signal honour by his magnificent sovereign, who had herself won the affections of her afflicted subjects by the solicitude she had displayed for their welfare

It was in the year 1772, that Catherine II. degraded herself by the perpetration of one of the few disgraceful acts, which sully her reputation as a sovereign, and still more, as a woman. The Empress Elizabeth, by her secret marriage with Razumosky, had three children. The youngest of these was an interesting girl, brought up under the name of the Princess Tarrakannof. Prince Radzivil, informed of this secret, and irritated at Catherine's trampling under foot the rights of the Poles, imagined that the daughter of Elizabeth would furnish him with a successful instrument of revenge. He determined to oppose her claims to the throne against those of the ambitious Empress, who was devastating his native land. Perhaps he even entertained higher and more aspiring hopes, that he might one day share the throne, to which he proposed to elevate the innocent princess. He gained over the persons to whom her education had been intrusted, and conveyed her to Rome.

The vigilant Catherine obtained intelligence, through her spies, of the intentions of Radzivil, and of the elevation destined for the princess. She caused all his estates to be seized, and reduced him to the necessity of living on the valuable jewels which he had carried with him into Italy. But these resources were soon exhausted. Radzivil set out to obtain what information he could, concerning political affairs in Poland, leaving the princess in Rome, under the care of a single governante, and living in very limited circumstances

As soon as he reached Poland, an offer was made to him that all his estates would be restored, if he would convey the princess into Russia. This offer he refused with indignation He saw at once that it was a plot for the destruction of the youthful princess. Yet he was so far won over by the prospect of returning wealth, that he promised to give himself no further trouble about her, and her future fortunes.

Alexius Orlof was then employed by Catherine to accomplish her cruel purpose. She sent him to Italy. He landed at Leghorn. He thence proceeded to Rome. There, he soon discovered the residence of the young princess, by means of one of those intriguers so common in Italy. This man, whose name was Ribas, introduced himself to her as a Russian officer. He told her that he had come there for the sole purpose of paying his homage to the princess whom he believed to be his lawful sovereign. He seemed very much affected at the destitution in which he found her, and offered her some assistance, which necessity compelled her to accept.

When this villain supposed that he had sufficiently prepared the way, he announced that he was commissioned by Alexius Orlof, to offer to the daughter of Elizabeth, the throne which had been once filled by her mother. He said that the Russians were dissatisfied with Catherine; that Orlof especially, would never forgive her ingratitude and tyranny; and that if the young princess would accept of the services of that general,

and recompense him with the gift of her hand in marriage, she would soon see the breaking out of the revolution which would place her triumphantly on the throne of her ancestors.

The princess could not resist the temptation of proposals so brilliant. She had been taught by Radzivil to expect a career of this exalted character. With a grateful heart she acknowledged the obligations under which she was placed to the count; and acquiesced in all the proposals which were thus made. He was then introduced to her. He was received with joy. And, although the princess was cautioned by some of her friends, to be on her guard against a man so dissolute and so treacherous as Orlof, yet she never for one moment, doubted his sincerity and good faith. She even frankly spoke of their suspicions to Orlof, who easily justified himself, and threw a deeper shade of dissimulation and deceit around his future actions. He pretended to love her; and inspired the unhappy princess with a reciprocal flame. She consented to marry him. She thought that her being the wife of Count Orlof, would prove a sufficient protection, against any of the conspiracies which were formed against her. Pretending that he wished the ceremony to be performed according to the Greek ritual, he employed several villains to represent themselves as Greek Priests, and to perform a semblance of the rite of marriage between them.

As soon as Orlof had become her husband, or rather her

ravisher, he represented to her, that their stay at Rome exposed them to too much scrutiny; and he proposed to reside in some other city. Supposing that this proposition was the result only of affection and prudence, she replied, that she was willing to go wherever he chose to conduct her. It seems scarcely possible, that human depravity could be so great as to take advantage of simplicity so childlike and so confiding, in order to work the ruin of an unsuspecting victim. To further the plot a division of the Russian squadron had been ordered to Leghorn. Orlof told the princess that his presence was necessary at that city, to give some orders to the fleet. He proposed to conduct her thither. To this she willingly agreed, as she said she had heard many praises of the port of Leghorn, and desired to behold its romantic beauties.

On arriving at Leghorn, she lodged at the house of the English consul. She was there treated with great respect, by a large attendance of distinguished persons. Wherever she went, she became the object of respectful attention. At the theatre all eyes were directed to the box which she occupied Every circumstance tended to remove from her mind all suspicion of treachery. It is probable the English consul, and those who united with him, in these testimonies of regard to the exiled Russian princess, were innocent of any guile themselves, and were ignorant of the unhappy fate which impended over their unfortunate guest.

So unsuspicious was she, that after spending several days in a round of amusement and pleasure, she herself expressed a desire to visit the Russian ships which rode at anchor in the port. The necessary orders were immediately given. Everything was soon ready for receiving the princess. On her coming to the water side, she was handed into a boat covered with magnificent awnings. The consul and several ladies seated themselves with her. A second boat conveyed the Russian Admiral Grieg, and Count Orlof; and a third was filled with Russian and English soldiers. An immense multitude witnessed their departure from the shore. They were received by the fleet with music, with salutes of artillery, and with loud huzzas. As the princess came alongside the ship, of which she was to go on board, an elegant chair was let down from the yard, in which she was hoisted on deck.

But the moment that the unhappy princess was on board, she was handcuffed. In vain she besought with tears the pity of her brutal betrayer, whom she still dignified by the outraged name of husband. In vain she threw herself at his feet, and bedewed them with her tears. He did not even deign to bestow an answer to her supplications. She was rudely forced down into the hold, and there instantly put in chains. On the next day the fleet immediately set sail. When the princess arrived in St. Petersburg she was confined in a fortress, and her subsequent fate is buried in oblivion. It has been

said, that six years afterward, when the waters of the Neva rose to an extraordinary height, she was drowned in her prison. A different rumour ran, that she died by the sword of the executioner a few months after the commencement of her captivity. But whatever may have been her unhappy fate, a more sad and mournful instance than this, of unfeeling cruelty, inflicted upon an innocent and confiding woman, does not disgrace the blood-stained annals of tyrants and of assassins It teaches to mankind an instructive lesson, as to the omnipotent sway which one controlling passion may exercise over minds otherwise not badly organized, and possessed even of many admirable virtues. In this case, the supreme influence of Catherine's ambition is exhibited in her disposition, and is seen in her willingness, to destroy for ever the happiness and the hopes of an innocent and virtuous woman; of a person who, had she not been misled by the crafty insinuations of Orlof, had never even contemplated the project of ascending a throne; though her title had at least some show of justice.

In 1773, the Grand Duke of Russia set out upon his long-projected journey to Berlin. Catherine sent for Field Marshal Romantzof, from his government of the Ukraine, that he might accompany the prince during his travels. He accompanied Prince Henry of Prussia, then on his second journey to St. Petersburg, and on their departure the Empress declared to the two eminent persons who journeyed with her son: "It is

only to the friendship of Prince Henry, and to the most illustrious defender of my throne, that I can consent to trust my son." When the Prussian prince took leave of Catherine, she seemed to be much affected: but she had become so skilful an adept in the princely art of disguising her sentiments, and pretending the deepest emotions, while her heart remained untouched, that it would perhaps be unwise to ascribe much sincerity to these demonstrations of attachment.

But Prince Henry had scarcely reached Riga, before he received several letters from her. The following is that which she wrote him with her own hand: "I take the liberty of transmitting to your Royal Highness the four letters of which I spoke to you, and of which you promised to take charge. The first is for the King, your brother. The others are for the Prince and Princess of Wirtemberg. I venture to ask you, that if my son should bestow his heart on the Princess Sophia, as I have no doubt he will, to deliver the three letters according to their direction, and to support the purport of them with that persuasive eloquence with which God has gifted you. The convincing and repeated proofs which you have given me of your friendship, the high esteem which I have conceived for your virtues, and the extent of the confidence which you have taught me to repose in you, leave me no doubt of the success of an enterprise which I have so much at heart. It was not possible for me to place it in better hands. Your

Royal Highness is assuredly an *unique* in the art of negotiation. Pardon me that expression of my friendship. But I think that there never has been an example of an affair of this nature, transacted as this is. Accordingly it is the production of the most intimate friendship and confidence. That princess will be a pledge of it. I shall not be able to see her without recollecting in what manner this business was begun, how it was continued, and how it terminated, between the royal houses of Russia and Prussia. May it perpetuate the connexions which unite us!—I conclude, by very tenderly thanking your Highness for all the cares, and the various troubles you have given yourself; and I beseech you to be assured, that my gratitude, my friendship, and the high consideration which I now entertain for you, can only terminate with life itself."

After stopping for twenty-four hours at Riga, and witnessing the evolutions of some troops placed there, the princes proceeded to Mittau, where they were received by the Duke of Courland. This person was the son of the famous Duke Biren, whom Catherine had recalled from banishment, and who had just finished his long and stormy career. The Grand Duke having arrived at Berlin, received the honours which were due to his rank. Prince Henry presented him to the King, who came out to meet them at the entrance of his apartment The Grand Duke then addressed the King in these words:

"The motives which bring me from the extremities of the North to these happy regions, are a desire to assure your Majesty of the friendship and alliance which must henceforth for ever subsist between Russia and Prussia; and my eagerness to see a princess who is destined to ascend the throne of the Russian empire, who will be more dear to me because she has been received at your hands." The prince added the satisfaction which he felt in beholding the greatest of modern heroes, the admiration of the age, and the astonishment of posterity.

Here the King interrupted him by saying: "Instead of which, you behold only a gray-headed valetudinarian, who could never have wished for a greater happiness, than that of welcoming within these walls, the hopeful heir of a mighty empire, the only son of my best friend, the great Catherine!" The King, then, turning toward the veteran Marshal, added: "Welcome, conqueror of the Ottomans! I find a great resemblance between you and my General Winterfeldt." The Marshal courteously replied: "I am ambitious to resemble, even outwardly, a general who has so gloriously distinguished himself in your Majesty's service."

After these courtly compliments had passed, which meant as much as the compliments of princes usually mean, the King and princes proceeded to the apartments of the Queen, where many distinguished persons were assembled. Here the Grand Duke saw, for the first time, the Princess Sophia of Hesse-Darm-

stadt to whom he was to be allied. Prince Henry, in the name of the Empress of Russia, made a formal demand of the hand of the princess for the Grand Duke, and the ceremony of the contract took place the same day. Feasts and entertainments of a splendid description followed this happy event, at Charlottenburg, at Potsdam, at Sans Souci. The Russian Marshal was much delighted with witnessing the grand evolutions of the garrison at Potsdam. The aged King, who had witnessed so many fearful conflicts, made his troops perform their manœuvres by square battalions, in imitation of the bloody battle of Kagul, where the Russians gained a complete victory over the Ottomans. Prince Henry then accompanied the Grand Duke to the castle of Reinsburg, where he gave him an entertainment, which lasted four days, with great magnificence. On the third of August, 1776, the Grand Duke took leave of the royal family, and returned to Russia.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARRIAGE OF CATHERINE'S SON, THE GRAND DUKE.—DIDEROT VISITS ST. PETERSBURG.—VOLTAIRE DECLINES CATHERINE'S INVITATION.—CATHERINE'S INTRIGUES.—HER FEARS OF A CONSPIRACY.—DOWN FALL OF VASSILTCHIKOF.—RETURN OF ORLOF TO THE POSITION OF FAVOURITE.—CATHERINE EMBELLISHES ST. PETERSBURG.—HER DOMESTIC HABITS.—HISTORY OF THE FORMIDABLE CONSPIRACY OF PUGATSCHEF.—ITS OVERTHROW.

It was in 1773 that the dismemberment of Poland was continued, through the combined agency of the sovereigns of Russia, Prussia, and Austria. The indignant Poles exclaimed against the outrage. They claimed, though in vain, the interference of the other powers of Europe. To give some show of justice to their proceedings, the three sovereigns advised the Poles to convene a diet, to settle and arrange their difficulties. The diet was convoked on the 19th of April. The deputies were soon bought over by promises and money. They finally passed a decree approving of the dismemberment which had been made, as being dictated by prudence and a wise regard of the peculiar circumstances of the Polish nation. By this partition, Poland lost five millions of inhabitants. Of these, the lion's share fell to Russia, containing one million

and a half of inhabitants. Prussia acquired nine hundred thousand inhabitants, and the commerce of the Vistula, together with Elbing, Dantzig, and Thorne. The rest of the plundered territory fell to the lot of Austria. The King of Poland was, in the mean while, a mere tool in the hands of the monarchs who were thus carving out his territories. This fact is illustrated by the treatment he received from their respective ambassadors. On one occasion, when visiting Stackelberg, the Russian minister, the latter was engaged at a game of cards, when the King entered. The minister did not even rise from the game, but sat still, showed the King a chair, and familiarly beckoned to him to sit down. The Russian minister was, in truth, the real sovereign at Warsaw.

Catherine had, as we have said, been meditating a matrimonial alliance for her son, the Grand Duke. But as that prince was of a weak constitution, and a cold temperament, she had feared that his marriage would be of no service so far as procuring heirs to the empire was concerned. She soon determined to test the truthfulness of her suspicions. Her confidants placed the prince in the society of a beautiful Polish widow, named Sophia Ossipoona, a lady of easy and compliant virtue. The result of their acquaintance was, in due time, the birth of a son, who was named Simeon. This person afterward served in the navy; reached the rank of lieutenant; and died in the West Indies in 1797.

Assured in this manner of the propriety of her son's marriage, Catherine returned to the task of arranging his nuptials. She sought for a princess, in the greatest degree unlike herself; one unfit to govern, and unambitious of authority. After the Grand Duke's visit to Berlin, as already narrated, she invited the Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt and her mother to her court. They came. The Empress received them with magnificence. The Princess Sophia embraced the Greek religion, and was joined in marriage to the heir of the Czars. This event occurred on the 10th of August, 1773. It was solemnized by the Archbishops of Novogorod and St. Petersburg. The festivities of the occasion were continued from the 10th to the 21st of the month, and the cathedral in which the ceremony was performed, was graced with the nobility of the Russian nation. An attempt was made, upon this marriage of the Grand Duke, by his enemies at court, to obtain Count Panin's disgrace; as it was supposed the marriage of his pupil would put an end to his influence over him. They were deceived in their calculations. The aged Count retained his position and his influence, though opposed with the greatest vehemence by Gregory Orlof. The true secret of the security of his position was unknown to his enemies, and baffled all their intrigues. He possessed the affection and support of his former pupil, the Grand Duke, whose influence with his mother was decided.

Catherine was honoured in 1773, at St. Petersburg, with a visit from the illustrious philosopher Diderot.* Voltaire, taught wisdom, or caution, by his experience at the court of Frederic the Great, declined the invitations which the Empress extended to him to visit her. Diderot was more easily persuaded. Catherine lavished upon him encomiums and presents. During his stay at St. Petersburg, she entered into familiar conversation with him daily at her table. The subjects of their discussions were various and profound—philosophy, politics, religion, and literature, all were freely dwelt upon by those master minds. Diderot expounded his principles on the subject of the rights of nations, with eloquence, enthusiasm, and power. His illustrious hostess was charmed with the richness of his ideas. Of him she said: "M. Diderot is a

* Catherine, though she admired Diderot's splendid genius, placed but little confidence in his practical ideas. She held long and frequent conferences with him. Respecting these, she has left her opinions on record. Says she, "Had I placed faith in him, every institution in my empire would have been overturned; everything would have been changed, for the purpose of substituting some impracticable theories. I said to him, 'M. Diderot, I have listened with the greatest pleasure to all which your brilliant genius has conceived and expressed, but all your fine principles, though they will make fine books, would make sad havoc in actual practice. You forget, in all your plans for reformation, the difference between our two positions. You work on paper, which is tractable to everything, while I, a poor Empress, must work on human nature, which is irritable and easily offended.'" *Vide Memoirs of the Count de Segur, Vol. I., p.* 221.

hundred years old in many respects; in others he is not more than ten." Her correspondence with Voltaire was voluminous and regular, and is an honour to both parties. By associations of this kind, Catherine added another proof to the many already existing, of the superiority of her intellect; and of her claim to that high praise which she has secured, as a woman of enlarged understanding and exalted mind. She furnishes another of those many remarkable instances recorded in history, of natures which are capable of the two greatest extremes of vice and virtue; of elevation and degradation; of honour and of infamy.

Attentive as she was to the interests of her empire, Catherine had not bidden adieu to pleasure, or lost her appetite for intrigue. She passed with easy facility from the council-chamber to the theatre; from the sittings of the senate, to the flirtations of the ball-room, and to the dalliance of her boudoir. Easy in her new attachments, she never referred to those which had gone before. But it is said, that even at this period of triumph and pleasure, she often gave evidence of being ill at ease in her mind, and of being tortured by the fear of conspiracies and assassination. She sometimes trembled for her life. One day she found a paper in her cabinet threatening her with violence. She could not conceal her agitation; yet in public, she was able to assume the appearance of confidence and security. Whatever were the emotions which swayed her mind, she always presented to others an aspect of gentleness,

clemency, sincerity, and generosity At this period, she offered the remaining member of the family of the murdered Ivan his liberty, with the means of retiring to Germany. "Why should I go," said he, "out of the Russian empire, only to proclaim elsewhere my misery, and to excite the unavailing commiseration of mankind?" He refused to embrace her offer, and remained in his prison.

The favourite, who at this time was uppermost in Catherine's regard, was Vasiltchikof. He possessed a quality rare among courtiers; that of moderation and sincerity. He never abused his influence to obtain exorbitant riches; and consequently, he created no enemies, and excited no jealousy. Catherine frequently praised these rare merits in the object of her regard. But suddenly and unaccountably, a mysterious change came over his imperial mistress and her feelings toward him. Without any offence or fault on his part, he was dismissed to Moscow, though loaded with presents, and consoled by the parting tenderness of Catherine. The real truth appeared immediately after. Count Orlof had returned from his travels, after an absence of several years. The sight of him probably revived old and pleasing associations in the susceptible heart of the Empress; and she could not resist that fascination, whose power she had experienced in former times. Eleven years passed near the person of the Empress, had made him, as it were, a necessary appendage to herself; though during the period of

his absence from her presence, he had not conducted himself in a manner worthy of his relation to her. Instead of maintaining the dignity of his rank, and his former position, he seems to have delighted in contradictions. In a condition to keep a magnificent establishment, he almost always dined with his servants. He was not more choice in his amours. It seemed indifferent to him, whether he enjoyed the embraces of a squalid Finlander, a savage Kalmuck, or the most beautiful and fascinating Circassian. Catherine knew all this; but the heart of woman is a mysterious enigma. It baffles the diagnosis of the profoundest philosopher. The Empress was probably reminded, by her renewed attachment for Orlof, of the fresher and happier days and pleasures of her youth; when love possessed a charm and an intensity, which the cold hand of time, the crushing effect of many anxieties, the cares of state, as well as many personal perils, had now diminished. In his society she doubtless experienced a sympathy and harmony of feeling which she could not enjoy in the attachment of any younger lover.

Meanwhile, the Empress was not negligent of the improvement of her capital. St. Petersburg, summoned into a glorious being by the powerful enchantment of the genius of Peter the Great, had gradually grown to be a city of palaces: everything in it was colossal, like the empire it represented, and the genius which created it. It had become the city of magnificent dis-

tances, and was justly the admiration of all strangers from every quarter of the globe. Catherine did not neglect its improvement. The Neva and all its branches and canals, which intersected the city, were embanked with granite, with magnificent quays of the same material, and elegant balustrades of marble were constructed. Splendid bridges of hewed stone, and richly ornamented, spanned the river at convenient intervals. Palaces, and public offices of prodigious size, and elegant proportions, were built of marble, of different colours. She also erected many benevolent institutions, planned after the best models, and provided for them suitable buildings and appendages. Her capital, truly splendid before, now assumed, under the touch of her magic fingers, a gorgeous magnificence, which probably exceeded that of any other European city. If she had been admired and feared for her intrepidity in danger, for her success in diplomacy, for her triumphs in war; she was now also praised and esteemed for the liberality and taste with which she cultivated the nobler arts of peace, and promoted the glory and happiness of her subjects. Her internal improvements were not confined to St. Petersburg alone. Other cities of her empire, Moscow, Kief, Novogorod. were also adorned by her liberal and munificent taste. Her emissaries purchased, in other portions of Europe, galleries of paintings at enormous prices, which were transported to her own dominions, and added to the splendour of her own cities

At this period (1774) of her life, Catherine may be said to have been at the zenith of her prosperity and her fame. She was now in the forty-fifth year of her age. She is described by contemporary historians as possessing that stature which is necessary to elegance of form and dignity of carriage. Her gait was majestic, self-possessed, and graceful. She seemed born to command, and was apparently fully conscious of her high destiny. Yet her features were not offensively masculine. They were those of an ambitious woman; but still possessing a woman's sweetness, delicacy, and refinement. She had large blue eyes, full of feeling and expression. Her eyebrows and hair were of an auburn colour. Her mouth was well proportioned. Her chin was round and full. Her forehead was regular and capacious. Her hands and arms were remarkably white and beautiful. Her complexion was not entirely clear; her neck and bosom high and full, and her figure rather plump than meagre. She was sprightly rather than grave; courteous, beneficent, and outwardly at least, devout in the observance of her religion.

Her ordinary method of life was the following. She arose at six in the morning, even in the depth of the Russian winters. She usually made her own toilet with but very little attend ance; it being a judicious maxim of hers, to require as little assistance from others as possible. She then breakfasted, that over, she signed the various commissions, orders, and

papers which required her signature. On days when the council did not meet in her apartments, she was engaged in this manner from eight till eleven, in the forenoon. From this time till one, her various ministers had access to her. At half-past one she dined. After dinner the Empress usually rode out; and at six she made her appearance at the theatre. After the performance was over she took supper, usually at ten o'clock; after which she retired, unless a ball or festival was given at which she was to be present. She herself never danced, though she frequently took a game of cards.

By her express orders, no one could be condemned to death, until the facts were communicated to her, and she gave her approval. She became thoroughly acquainted with whatever concerned the administration of the government, in its various departments. The administration of justice could not be charged with rigour during her reign; although she repealed the law of her predecessor Elizabeth, which had abolished the penalty of death in the Russian empire. She acted from sound policy by so doing; because the fear of death is necessary to the human mind, to deter men from crimes of the fiercer sort. The merit also belonged to Catherine, that she inflicted this penalty with the wisest discretion, and only on the most urgent necessity.

Notwithstanding the success of her administration, and the splendour of her reign, Catherine was called upon, in 1775, to

experience once more the anxieties attendant upon a formidable conspiracy,—the most dangerous with which she was threatened. This was the memorable insurrection of Pugatschef.

This adventurer was the son of a Cossack, and born in a village on the borders of the Don. He served at first as a common soldier in the army which the Empress Elizabeth sent against the King of Prussia in 1756. He afterward fought in 1769, under Count Panin, against the Turks. On the surrender of the city of Bender, already spoken of, he asked his discharge, which was refused. He deserted and fled to Poland, and there became the inmate of a monastery of Greek monks On several occasions, persons who had seen the Emperor Peter III., exclaimed in surprise, that in Pugatschef they beheld their former sovereign; so striking was the resemblance. It was this repeated proof which occurred to him from time to time, of the remarkable likeness between himself and that prince, which first suggested to his aspiring mind the project of heading an insurrection, on the pretence that he was the genuine Peter III., who had miraculously escaped from his assassins, and in whose place the murderers had substituted the corpse of another individual.

He first set forth this pretence among the Cossacks of the Don. His retinue at first consisted of nine persons. In a week afterward, he was at the head of three hundred men. He now openly proclaimed himself to be Peter III. returned

to claim his throne. Immediately five hundred more of the Cossacks came over to him. With these he commenced operations, by summoning the town of Yaitsk to surrender. He captured the place, and put many of the inhabitants to the sword. He next attacked Orenburg; and while the siege progressed, ten thousand Calmucks joined his ranks, together with a multitude of Poles, who had been banished from their native land to Siberia, and who embraced this opportunity to put an end to their exile, and the supposed cause of their misfortunes. By this time the spirit of rebellion had even reached Moscow. The influence and power of this formidable traitor had become tremendous. He strengthened his hold over the popular delusion, by wearing an episcopal robe, giving his benediction to the people, and declaring that he only wished to place his son Paul, the Grand Duke, upon the throne; when he would return again to the silence and sanctity of the cloister. Had he at this crisis attacked the city of Moscow, which was only garrisoned by six hundred men, and they perhaps disaffected toward the government, he could easily have made himself master of it But, like Hannibal in Italy, he delayed to march upon the capital in the critical moment of destiny; and having neglected to do so, the tide of fortune turned against him, and he could never retrieve the consequences of his error. Had Pugatschef properly improved his advantages at that crisis, such was the size of his army, and so great was the terror of his

name, that, in all probability the haughty Empress would soon have ceased to reign, and might have paid the forfeit of her elevation with her head. But Pugatschef wasted the winter before Orenburg, and was there guilty of such vicious excesses, as soon destroyed the popular enthusiasm in his favour. Though already married, he took to wife a common prostitute of that place, and celebrated his nuptials with a bacchanalian licentiousness, worthy of the occasion.

Catherine had now become thoroughly alarmed at the progress of a rebellion which seriously threatened the stability of her throne. She recalled Bibikof from the confines of Turkey. At the head of thirty-five thousand men, he advanced to the relief of Orenburg. Prince Galitzin also arrived at the scene of action with a large accession of troops. The hostile parties met, and a general engagement ensued. Pugatschef fought that day for five hours. He was routed; was abandoned by his followers on all sides; was compelled to flee; and with difficulty escaped to the mountains of Ural. Yet he did not give the struggle up, but, collecting his scattered troops, he presented a formidable resistance to the generals of Catherine for some time afterward. He kept the field until all his forces had been dispersed by successive defeats. He then crossed the Volga, and retreated into the vast deserts which lie beyond it. Thither he was pursued by one of the Empress's generals, and at length the place of his retreat was discovered, and he

surrounded. As he was prolonging his miserable life by gnawing the bones of a horse, one of the pursuing soldiers approached him saying: "Come, thou hast been long enough Emperor." Pugatschef fired a pistol and shattered the arm of one of the foremost. The rest of the Cossacks bound him, and took him a prisoner to their camp. He was put in chains at Yaïtsk, the scene of his first successes. Thence he was conveyed to Moscow in an iron cage, in September, 1774. For some days he refused all sustenance, till his keepers forced the food down his throat. During his confinement he preserved a melancholy and unconquerable silence. On his trial, he still pretended, in justification of his conduct, that he was the real Peter III. His sentence was, that both his hands and feet should be cut off; that they should be shown to the people, and that he should afterward be quartered alive. By some persons it is said, that this sentence was mitigated by the humanity of the Empress. He was first beheaded, and his body afterward quartered. Others assert that to the benevolence of his executioner alone, he was indebted for this mitigation of his sentence. Five of his principal accomplices were hanged, twenty more were subjected to the knout, and then sent to Siberia. He is said to have endured his fate with the most undaunted resolution. He was an adventurer of superior intelligence; and under more favourable auspices would have doubtless achieved a happier destiny.

CHAPTER IX.

POTEMPKIN BECOMES FAVOURITE.—HIS IMPRUDENCE AND DISMISSAL.—THE POSITION OF FAVOURITE PECULIAR TO THE RUSSIAN SOVEREIGNS.—OBSERVANCES ON THE ELEVATION AND CHOICE OF A FAVOURITE.—HIS HONOURS AND EMOLUMENTS.—MODE OF HIS DISMISSAL.—POTEMPKIN REINSTATED AS FAVOURITE.—HIS ATTEMPT TO INDUCE CATHERINE TO MARRY HIM.—SHE SUBDIVIDES HER EMPIRE INTO VICE-ROYALTIES.—ZAVADOSKY BECOMES FAVOURITE, AND POTEMPKIN PRIME MINISTER.—ENUMERATION OF CATHERINE'S FAMILY.

THE rebellion of Pugatschef having thus been crushed, the dominions of Catherine relapsed into their wonted quiet and security. The malcontents everywhere resumed their duty. We return to the more obscure, though not less interesting details, connected with the intrigues of the palace and the capital.

Catherine had for some time been pleased with the beauty and noble air of Potempkin, the youthful soldier who, on the day of her usurpation, seeing her hat deprived of its feather, had taken his own, and offered it to her majesty, in the presence of her suite. Orlof was still nominally her favourite, though the flame of love now burned feebly in her breast toward him

She resolved to be better acquainted with Potempkin, and the first interview which occurred between them, was so well improved by Potempkin, that he secured at once a pre-eminence over all his rivals, in her regard. Their attachment however, remained for the present a secret one, in order not to wound the vanity of Orlof, who still remained, at least the nominal occupant of his old position. But Potempkin was imprudent, and was destined to learn a severe lesson of caution before he was finally established in the affections of his sovereign.

One day, playing at billiards with Alexius Orlof, he was so silly as to boast of the favour he enjoyed, and declared that he had sufficient authority at court, to remove any persons whom he might dislike. A quarrel ensued between the courtiers, and Potempkin received a blow, which for ever deprived him of an eye. Nor was this his only misfortune. Gregory Orlof, informed of what had occurred, represented Potempkin's imprudence and presumption to the Empress in such light, that he received permission to retire to Smolensko, his native place. There he suffered much from vexation of mind, and also from his wound. His mind, harassed with chagrin, vacillated between a resolution to retire from the world, or entering again the career of a courtier. After remaining at Smolensko a year, he found his condition intolerable. He wrote to the Empress, beseeching her to commiserate his feelings. He succeeded in touching the tender chord in

her breast, and she immediately sent him letters of recall, and reinstated him in the full possession of her favour. He was installed at the palace, during the temporary absence of Prince Orlof at his hunting seat. On Orlof's return, he was astounded to see his place usurped by the new aspirant; but his complaints and reproaches were of no avail, to remove the fortunate man who had succeeded him.

We have had frequent occasion, in the progress of these memoirs, to narrate the changes which took place, from time to time, in the favourites or lovers of the Empress. These persons were so important in their influence, and so prominent in their position, throughout her reign, that a history of her life which should exclude the details to which we refer, simply on grounds of delicacy, would convey a most imperfect and incomplete idea of the subject under consideration. The post of favourite in Russia was somewhat peculiar. Although many of the European princesses have indulged the same propensity, yet in Russia, under Catherine, the favourite occupied a position of more importance than was ever attained by a mere lover, under the auspices of any other European sovereign. It may therefore be proper to narrate more at length the circumstances connected with this singular and apparently anomalous position and character.

It is an observation which we think history and experience will confirm, that when kings reign, women govern; and that

when women reign, men will rule. Not that the *entire* control of a kingdom will be thus transposed under such circumstances; but that the reciprocal influence is so great as to justify the opinion or maxim which we have just asserted. Russia had been governed in a great measure, during the century preceding the accession of Catherine, by three Empresses; by Anne, by the first Catherine, and by Elizabeth. Each of these women, in consequence of their peculiar temperaments, which demanded such an indulgence, had kept the post of favourite constantly occupied by persons who possessed their affections. To the contemporaries of Catherine, therefore, her own conduct did not seem either monstrous or outrageous. To them it was not even indelicate or indecorous. They never for a moment thought of censuring a custom which had become fundamental usage of the empire; a necessary appendage to imperial luxury and grandeur. Reasons of state, in the case of Catherine II., prevented her from entering into any matrimonial alliance. It was not to be presumed, that a woman of her temperament, as well as of her power, would submit to inconveniences which she might easily remove, or endure an annoyance which she might, with perfect impunity, remedy.

The duties and distinctions of the favourites of Catherine were peculiar. When her Majesty had conceived a desire for the enjoyment of the society of any one of her subjects, she created him an *aid-de-camp*, in order that he might be near

her person, without exciting remark or attention. Henceforth the Empress had a better opportunity to scan his person and his disposition. When the judgment which she formed was favourable, she informed her female confidant of the fact, who communicated his good fortune to him, who had been so deserving. The next day he received a visit from the Empress's physician, who examined into the state of his health, and carefully scrutinized his person. The report of this examination being favourable, he was the same day introduced to his apartments at the palace. These were immediately below those of the Empress, with which they communicated by a private staircase. The first day of his installation, he received a present of a hundred thousand rubles; and every month he found twelve thousand more on his dressing table. The Marshal of the court was commissioned to provide for him a table of twenty covers, and to defray all the expenses of his household. The favourite attended the Empress on all parties of pleasure; at the opera, balls, promenades, and excursions. He was not allowed to leave the palace without express permission. The jealousy of the Empress required that he should not even converse familiarly with any other woman; and that if he dined with any of his friends, the mistress of the house was not permitted to be present.

There was also a peculiar mode of dismissing a favourite, when he no longer possessed the power to please his imperial

patroness. He received permission to retire to a certain designated place, at a distance from the residence of the Empress. But when he arrived there, he found awaiting him the most splendid presents, worthy of the magnificence and former affection of Catherine. He was at once secured, by an ample revenue, from the possibility of all future want or dependence. By this means she secured both his absence, and his grateful remembrance; and at the same time, he was rendered disposed to cherish the reputation of his former patron with deference and respect. Only one of her favourites, as we shall afterward see, was ever guilty of betraying her confidence, or of treating their intimacy with derision; and for that he was sufficiently punished.*

* It serves as an illustration of the singular state of affairs in the court and capital of Catherine, that all the officers and courtiers, who made any pretensions to personal beauty, endeavoured, on every occasion, to throw themselves in the way of the Empress. The nobles of the court would sometimes give place to a good-looking man, knowing that nothing gratified their sovereign so well, as to traverse her apartments between two rows of handsome youths. It was a situation which young men eagerly sought, and paid for, as opening a chance for the brightest fortunes; and when they had obtained that position, they endeavoured to exhibit themselves to the greatest advantage. Many families even founded their hopes of advancement, on the success of some handsome young relation, to whom they strove to attract the attention of Empress; just as other people endeavour to obtain brilliant matches for their daughters, and by *their* means to promote the languishing fortunes of their families. *Vide Life of Catherine II. London*, 1802 *Vol. III. p.* 89.

Russia, during 1775, enjoyed a release from all foreign wars, as well as domestic commotions. The empire was in peace; and Catherine devoted her attention to the improvement of the country and the promotion of its multifarious interests. Potempkin had reached the double honour of imperial favourite and prime minister; and his sovereign found him a coadjutor, equally efficient in both capacities. To him was intrusted an immense share of power, and he was looked up to, as the dispenser of all titles and favours of the court. Conscious of his vast influence, he grew wanton in its enjoyment, and scarcely a day passed by, in which he did not obtain some new accession of dignity or revenue.

Gregory Orlof, unable to endure the amazing success of his former rival, now desired permission to retire from the court. Catherine was too shrewd a politician to grant his request. Though she no longer entertained the slightest affection for him, yet she well knew the violence of his passions, and feared that he might, during his absence, become the centre of a dangerous conspiracy against her throne and her life. She ordered him to remain. She continued him in the exercise of those offices about the court, which made his presence there necessary. She also thought, that while he remained near her person, he would act as a check upon the arrogance and vehemence of Potempkin. The spirit which the latter now exhibited, may be illustrated by the following incident: 'He

was once sent for to council, when engaged at a game of cards He refused to go. The messenger humbly asking a reason for his non-compliance, was told he might find it in the Bible. The messenger inquired where. In the first psalm, said he, and the first verse: *Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum!*

But what singular changes will not a crafty ambition produce in the conduct and deportment of men? Potempkin, heretofore an arrogant courtier, and irreverent scoffer, suddenly assumed an exterior of the most rigid piety. During Lent, he who had before put the remotest countries under contribution to furnish the delicacies of his table, all at once lived upon the diet of a hermit, went every day to confession, and wearied the heavens with his prayers. He had chosen and bought over the same confessor who shrove the Empress, his mistress. The world was astounded at this sudden change; as well they might be. The shrewdness of Catherine, however, soon detected the cause. The conscience of Potempkin had suddenly waxed very tender. He was living in a state of sinful adultery. The vengeance of heaven hung over his head, and the lashings of his awakened conscience terrified his trembling soul. He must for ever relinquish a connexion, however dear and delightful to him, which had not the sanction of marriage to approve it.

At an interview and long conference which now took place

between the lovers, Catherine demeaned herself with her usual resolution and dignity. She easily saw through the motives of Potempkin's religious scruples. She told him, that though she had a regard for him, which she would not disguise, yet she was sufficiently mistress of herself, not to be made the tool of any such intrigue as this, and that if he was disposed no longer to hold the post of favourite, she could easily place another, equally acceptable, in his place.

Potempkin, surprised and humbled at the resolution of his mistress, soon forgot both his devotion and his resentment, in the pursuits of ambition and of pleasure. Reasons of state doubtless alone withheld Catherine from a marriage, which at that time, probably, might have otherwise been agreeable to her feelings.

She now proceeded to the more perfect organization of her empire, by dividing it into vice-royalties. Of these she formed forty-three; thirty-eight of which were in Europe, and five in Asia. Each of these had a general governor, with a government administration, and two counsellors. Subordinate to these, were a court of justice, a finance chamber, a county court, land surveyor, rent master, and other necessary functionaries. She published various ukases, adapted to the wants of different portions of her empire. One of these diffused joy and gladness to the inhabitants of Siberia, by which the commerce of that cheerless region was vastly promoted. She

established a bank at Tobolsk, in correspondence with the bank of St. Petersburg. She also advanced, by wise regulations, the general commerce of her empire. Her comprehensive mind gave proof that she was capable of the performance of the most difficult duties of the statesman and legislator. She renewed her treaty with England, and fostered the commerce of her subjects with that vast maritime nation. She continued to invite the immigration of foreigners, especially Germans, to those portions of her dominions which needed the accession of a more numerous population. By this wise policy, it must be admitted, that Catherine truly promoted the aggrandisement and greatness of her country. The wisdom, magnificence, and splendour of her actions, threw a lustre around her person and her reign, which dazzled the eyes of mankind, and secured for them deference and respect throughout the civilized world.

She displayed the vigour and comprehensiveness of her mind, by the variety of the duties which she performed, and the multiform pursuits of which she was capable. Her time was carefully distributed. She had, by this means, sufficient leisure to confer with her ministers. She framed new laws, and amended the old ones. She wrote with her own hands, the orders which she sent to her generals and ambassadors. She maintained a regular correspondence with distinguished artists, and men of letters, throughout Europe. She gave

audience at regular intervals to all her subjects, from the highest to the humblest. She indulged in the amusements of her court and capital. And she reserved for herself, from all these avocations, leisure to attend to those gratifications which arose from her more tender connexions.

At this period, in 1776, Potempkin ceased to possess her affections. He had been unconsciously supplanted by a handsome Circassian, named *Zavadosky*, who at that time was connected with a theatrical company in St. Petersburg. He had afterwards been employed by Marshal Romantzof, as his secretary and aid-de-camp. His elevation to the position of favourite, gave the Empress an opportunity to extend to Potempkin the usual, though unwelcome permission to travel. He acted, under these circumstances, with the eccentricity which so remarkably characterized him. On receiving the fatal order, he pretended to commence his journey: but the very next day he returned with the utmost composure, and placed himself just opposite the Empress, as she was sitting down to a game of whist. Without evincing the least mark of her displeasure, Catherine, with admirable self-possession, ordered him to cut the cards, remarking that he was always lucky. The result of this cool adventure was, that Potempkin, though he could not be the lover, became the friend and minister of the Empress; and was continued in all his offices and honours. Zavadosky could enact the lover; Potempkin

could play the statesman and the minister. His powerful genius long retained its influence over Catherine, who could easily appreciate the superiority of his understanding, and turn it to her own advantage. The courtiers, accustomed as they were to observe the movements of the Empress, were unable to determine which of the two was the real favourite. They forgot that love, the tender passion, is silent in the presence of the sterner power of ambition.

In 1776, the first wife of her son the Grand Duke died, leaving no heir to inherit the empire: the matter of the succession became one of too much importance to be neglected Among the princesses of her acquaintance, none had pleased her so much as the Princess of Wirtemberg. She was indeed, already betrothed to the hereditary Prince of Hesse Darmstadt. But Frederic the Great, whose influence was decisive with the court of Wirtemberg, employed that influence to break off the existing match, and establish a connexion with the Grand Duke of Russia. Prince Henry of Prussia was at that time making his second visit to the court of St. Petersburg. The Grand Duke Peter accompanied him on his return to Prussia. Upon the arrival of the princes at Potsdam, they were entertained by the Prussian monarch with the most magnificent feasts. On his departure from Berlin, Frederic presented him with a dessert service, a coffee service, ten vases of china, a ring with the King's portrait adorned

with a diamond valued at thirty thousand crowns, a set of Prussian horses, and four pieces of rich tapestry.

It was not long after the return of the Grand Duke to St. Petersburg, that the Princess of Wirtemberg followed him. She embraced the Greek religion, and was married to the Grand Duke. Twenty years after their nuptials, at the death of his mother, November 17, 1796, this happy couple ascended together the imperial throne.*

During the space of a year and a half, Zavadosky had now occupied the place of favourite. He had been unobtrusive, and had not interfered with the administrative functions of Potempkin. But suddenly his ambition was aroused, and he determined to turn out that minister. Informed of his intrigues, the latter, who possessed far greater abilities than his rival, re-

* They were the parents of a numerous offspring; five princes, and four princesses, as follows:

1. Alexander, born Dec. 12, 1777.
2. Constantine, born April 27, 1779.
3. Nicholas, born June 25, 1796.
4. Michael, born Jan. 8, 1798.
5. Alexander, born July 29, 1783.
6. Helena, born Dec. 13, 1784.
7. Maria, born February 4, 1786.
8. Catherina, born May 10, 1788.
9. Anna, born Jan. 7, 1795.

The third in the above list is the present sovereign who sways the sceptre of all the Russias; a man of acknowledged talent, and of great energy and resolution.

solved to crush him. For this purpose he placed in Catherine's way a beautiful young Servian, named Zoritch, who at once captivated the admiration and affection of the changeable Empress. The next day Zavadosky was dismissed, and Zoritch was installed in his place. The retiring favourite was honoured on his departure with a present of ninety thousand rubles, and a considerable estate in land. The new favourite was without education and without ambition. He was content to administer, in obscurity, to the pleasures of the Empress, without aspiring to any higher or nobler function, for which his talents were wholly unfit.*

The various and rapid changes which took place in Cathe-

* *Zoritch*, on whom the inconstant Catherine next cast her greedy eye, was the only foreigner whom she ventured to create favourite, during her reign. He was a Servian by birth; who had been taken prisoner among the Turks, and had made his escape from Constantinople, where he was confined as a slave. He appeared at court for the first time, in the elegant dress of a hussar. His attractive beauty dazzled every eye, and the old ladies of Russia spoke of him for many years after as an Adonis. Protected at first by Potempkin, he wished at length to shake off his yoke; quarrelled with him, and challenged him to a duel. His mind, however, was not sufficiently cultivated to captivate or to influence that of Catherine; who dismissed him at the end of twelve months, loaded with valuable favours. He obtained the town of Schklof, which was erected into a kind of sovereignty for him,—the only instance of the kind which occurred in Russia. *Vide Secret Memoirs of the Court of St. Petersburg. London*, 1801. *Vol. I p.* 112.

rine's succession of favourites, which we have traced from time to time, suggests to the mind a singular inquiry respecting the real nature of that remarkable attachment which she displayed, and which perhaps has no parallel in the history of sovereigns and of women. The only instance somewhat analogous to hers, which occurs in history, is that of Cleopatra; and we would infer, from the respective histories of these two women, that their mental constitution and their physical temperaments must have been very similar. Catherine's passion was not, on the one hand, the pure, the constant, and the undying attachment of true love. Too many successful aspirants enjoyed the honour of her partiality, to allow for one moment, the truth of such a supposition. Neither was her passion that of the mercenary, and the volatile libertine, to whom the society of one lover is as acceptable as that of another. Her changes and caprices were not sufficiently frequent, to justify such an imputation. How then shall we designate her social feeling? We imagine, that her love was a purely gross and sensual emotion, produced by the external beauty, the extraordinary symmetry of form and gracefulness, of her favourite; that her attachment continued undivided while these merits retained their virtue; that there was but little romance, little sentiment, in the emotion which she experienced; and that the lover lost his power to please, just as soon as the

novelty of his charms, and the energy of his devotion, had become exhausted. Yet she loved as became an Empress; and she cherished for the time the object of her affection, as ardently as if she felt a purer and a nobler flame.

CHAPTER X.

SPLENDOUR OF THE COURT OF ST. PETERSBURG AT THIS TIME.—VISIT OF THE CELEBRATED DUCHESS OF KINGSTON TO ST. PETERSBURG.—SHE DECLINES IN CATHERINE'S FAVOUR, AND RETIRES IN DISGUST TO ROME.—CATHERINE'S LITERARY PRODUCTIONS.—ZORITCH BECOMES FAVOURITE.—HE IS DISMISSED.—KORSAKOF SUCCEEDS HIM.—HIS IGNORANCE AND VANITY.—HIS DISMISSAL.—LANSKOI BECOMES FAVOURITE.—JOURNEY TO MOHILEF.

THE court of St. Petersburg, at this period, was certainly one of great splendour and distinction. It was regarded with profound respect by all the rest of Europe. The magnificence of the empire over which it ruled, at once gave it grandeur and pre-eminence. That empire was equal, in superficial extent, to all the other kingdoms of Europe combined; extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and from the dominions of Maria Theresa far into the untrodden deserts of Tartary. Its capital, planted on the marshy shores of the Neva, by the magic wand of the great Peter, had grown up into a stupendous mass of palaces, temples, and citadels, whose gilded spires of mingled Asiatic and European architecture, pierced those northern heavens, and glittered in the morning and evening sun. Under this dominion, were assembled nations of many distant climes

and kindreds; Cossacks of the Don, Calmucks, Poles, Circassians, Siberians, Tartars, Germans, and Russians; while the decrees of the Great Empress were received, and obeyed with reverence, by one-fourth of the inhabitants of the civilized globe.

Her court itself could vie, in lavish splendour, in feminine beauty, in princely wealth, in illustrious names, in manly genius, and in its courtiers of high and noble birth, with the proudest among men. There, as a fit centre to so magnificent a throng, was the mighty Empress herself;—a woman of high and daring spirit, who had ventured boldly into the most desperate and perilous vicissitudes of fortune. By the charms of her wit, and the brilliancy of her genius, she had proved herself an equal, and a worthy associate of the most illustrious personages of the age; of Frederic the Great, of Voltaire, of Euler, and of Diderot. By the comprehensive energy of her mind, she had won the palm in statesmanship, and stood among the first legislators of the times. She had uniformly triumphed in the dangerous game of war; and even the ancient capital of the Roman empire in the East, the Queen of cities, the admiration of the whole world, herself had trembled on her hills, at the mighty name of the sovereign before whose invincible legions, the children of the Prophet had so often fled in battle. There, surrounding her, were men and women of illustrious name, talents, and character:—Gregory Orlof, remarkable for his immense stature and daring mind; who,

when in the prime of his vigorous manhood, had aided to crush the life out of the trembling frame of the expiring and imploring Peter; who long had triumphed as the cherished lover of his grateful sovereign; and who had astounded foreign countries by the reckless extravagance of his expenditure, while travelling to assuage the fierce fires of his soul, when he saw his place usurped by a more graceful and fascinating lover. Now, his lofty head whitened with the frosts of age, he still presented a bold and daring front,—a worthy representative of the rude and gigantic Genius of the North; with whose checkered fortunes, his history and his life had been so long and so closely identified. There was the beautiful, the accomplished, the romantic Princess Dashkoff; at first the intimate and bosom friend of the Empress, before she had ascended the throne who had staked her life upon the throw, which was to win or lose a crown; who in the hour of victory had shared the equal joy of her triumphant friend, and now, after various vicissitudes, and the full experience of the pleasures and sorrows of ambition, of love, and of friendship, was calmly reposing in the enjoyment of her fame, her recollections, and the affection of her sovereign. Among that group were to be seen the aged Panin, grown gray in the service of his honoured mistress; the chivalrous and daring Alexius Orlof, whose vigorous arm had destroyed the perilous conspiracy of Pugatschef; the veteran Marshal Munich, who during the sixty-five years of his active

life, had served more sovereigns, had fought more battles, had won more victories, and had experienced more of the grandeur and the littleness, the changes and the vicissitudes of fortune, than all the generals then in Europe combined. There was the renowned Romantzof, who had destroyed the boasted armies of the Sultan on many an ensanguined field, and caused the blood of the infidels to flow in torrents, on many a triumphant plain. There was Prince Galitzin, the elegant courtier and the accomplished statesman; and lastly, though not least. the eccentric Potempkin, an enigma in human nature; possessed of great talents and great foibles; capable of wisely governing empires, incapable of governing himself; enjoying every gratification which lavished millions could bestow, and yet, unsatisfied and displeased; able to overreach every other statesman and diplomatist in Europe, and yet himself deceived by his own *valet de chambre.* There were collected, by the munificence of the Empress, men distinguished in every science and every art; poets, historians, philosophers, artists, soldiers, courtiers, and prelates; who, though some of their names have since descended to the shades of oblivion, in their own day stood high in contemporary distinction and renown.

Many distinguished foreigners were then attracted by the splendour of the court of St. Petersburg, and honoured it with their presence. Among these, was the renowned Duchess of Kingston. In 1777 the waves of the Gulf of Finland wafted

her magnificent yacht to the quays of the Neva This lady was celebrated for her great beauty, her wit, her luxury, her eccentricities, and her amorous adventures. She was attended by Garnosky, at that time her favourite. Her distinction in the world of fashion and of dissipation, made her visit to the Russian capital an event of considerable consequence. Her yacht had been damaged by a severe storm and inundation upon the coast, and the Empress had it repaired at her own expense. Accordingly, all its stores and sumptuous furniture were unladed, and lodged in the apartments of the Admiralty, and then, by the labour of some hundreds of people, and by means of levers and engines constructed for the purpose, the yacht was lifted on shore, and the repairs completed.

After a short residence, however, the Duchess displayed too much the weaknesses of her character, to retain the respect of the Russian court. She did not maintain that dignity of behaviour, and that elegance of manners, which became a woman of her exalted rank. At times, she seemed by her lavish expenditure to rival the entertainments of the palace; at others she excited universal contempt by her meanness and servility. The consequences were unpleasant. The Empress withdrew her attentions. She sank into neglect and obscurity with the court: and the mortified Countess was constrained to depart from St. Petersburg, and sail for Italy, where her adventures became afterwards sufficiently notorious.

Catherine did not neglect any means whereby the attachment of her subjects might be secured. In 1779 she established two honorary orders; that of St. George and St. Vladimir. The former is a military order, and divided into four classes. Its badges are a black ribbon with a George and a dragon. In 1790 this order was worn by about five hundred persons. A certain number of each class enjoy pensions of from one to seven hundred rubles. The order of St. Vladimir was instituted in 1782, by the Empress, on her twentieth coronation day. Its chapter was held in the church of St. Sophia. The star is of eight points, of gold and silver, having a red area, bearing a cross, with a ribbon of two black and one red stripes. In 1790 the number of knights was seven hundred

Amid the perplexities of a thousand cares, Catherine found time even to woo the muses. It is well known that she was the author of comedies, in which fanaticism and superstition were attacked with severity and ridicule. She displayed her talents as an author in the "Instruction for the Code of Laws," which exhibits the masculine mind of a profound legislator, and which was composed by herself, and written in full, in her own hand.

Even these multiplied cares and labours did not prevent her from indulging in the lighter fascinations of love and of adventure. She possessed all a woman's caprices. The Servian Zoritch had now enjoyed her affections for a twelvemonth,

during which time he had received very considerable presents. His mistress seemed perfectly satisfied with him. All at once, he received permission to enter on his travels. Astounded at this sudden reverse of fortune, Zoritch ran in dismay to Potempkin. The minister, pitying the misfortune of this harmless favourite, was willing to exert himself in his behalf. He repaired to the Empress, and inquired the reason of her sudden change of feeling. She answered: "I was fond of him yesterday: to-day I am not. Perhaps, if he were better educated, I might love him still; but his ignorance puts me to the blush. He can speak no other language than Russ. Let him travel into France and England, and learn foreign languages." Zoritch, finding the Empress inexorable, yielded to necessity, and visited the various countries of Europe. He spent some time at Paris, and afterwards returning to Russia, he resided at a small town on the Dnieper, where he built a theatre, and lived at an enormous expense. He never returned to court.

The same day that saw the dismissal of Zoritch, Potempkin set about finding a successor for him. But Catherine had already anticipated him. Going that very evening to the palace, he beheld a handsome youth behind the chair of Catherine, whom he instantly knew to be the favourite. His name was Korsakof, a sergeant in the imperial guards. This person possessed a handsome figure, and elegant manners: but he was

as deficient in education and talent, as was his predecessor He was not adapted therefore to encroach upon the influence or authority of Potempkin. Immediately after his elevation, he thought that it was essential to his dignity, that he should possess a library. Accordingly he sent for the principal bookseller of St. Petersburg, and told him his wishes. The merchant inquired what books he would be pleased to have? The favourite answered: "You understand that matter better than I; that is your business. Let there be large books at the bottom, and smaller and smaller up to the top. That is the way they stand in the Empress's library." The bookseller, understanding his interests in the case, went to his warehouse, unearthed a number of old German commentators on the Bible and jurisprudence, which had laid for many years in sheets, ever since he had taken them for a bad debt, from a bankrupt bookseller in Leipsic; he had them elegantly bound, and placed them at high prices in the favourite's library. He shrewdly interspersed among them, a set of Voltaire, of Rousseau, of Buffon, and other fashionable writers, at convenient distances, in conspicuous positions in the library, to be at hand, in case some of Korsakof's more erudite friends should inquire for them. For the rest, their elegant exteriors were a sufficient substitute for their internal defects. The favourite was highly pleased at their learned appearance, and there ended his acquaintance with them.

Prince Potempkin was at this period at the summit of his ministerial power and influence. The court, the army, the navy, all were subject to his authority. He appointed the ministers, the generals, the favourites. He also removed them at his pleasure. His outward manner was rude and uncouth in the extreme; but he was in reality one of the most artful and crafty of men. He exerted a supreme control over the Empress; but he maintained that supremacy by seeming to live and labour only for her service and her aggrandisement. He treated the highest dignitaries of the empire with that rudeness which borders on contempt; and yet he appeared to defy and despise their hostility. Marshal Romantzof alone, of all the courtiers, did not humble himself before the minister. There was, consequently, a mortal enmity between the parties. The hatred of Potempkin extended even to the sister of Romantzof, the Countess Bruce, and the most intimate friend of Catherine. He determined, if possible, to destroy the influence of both.

Korsakof, being at this time the imperial favourite, was often thrown into the society of the Countess Bruce. The benefits which his mistress heaped upon him, should at least have secured his gratitude, if they could not inspire him with love. He should at any rate have been faithful to her. Potempkin discovered that the Countess loved the favourite. But as yet, the constraint under which the latter lived was so great,

that it had been impossible for her to obtain the gratification of her wishes. Potempkin assisted the lovers in overcoming all the obstacles which stood in their way. He contrived the means of their secret interviews, and then enabled the Empress to discover, that she had been deceived by both friend and favourite. She immediately banished the former from her empire, and the latter to Moscow. If she was munificent in her attachments, she was also terrible and inexorable in her vengeance.

The next connexion which Catherine formed, was one of intenser and deeper feeling, than any which she had experienced for many years. The same day that Korsakof was dismissed she fixed her choice upon one of the chevalier guards named Lanskoï, sprung from an ancient Polish family; a youth of the most graceful figure, and remarkable beauty, which the imagination of man can conceive. His favourable appearance had at first recommended him to the notice of Catherine. But his only merits were not those of his person. His disposition was ascertained, upon a more intimate acquaintance, to be respectful, affectionate, and constant.* Of all the favourites whom

* *Lanskoï* was not only handsome in person, graceful, and accomplished: but an admirer of the arts, a friend to talent, amiable and beneficent. Every one seemed to take an interest in the Sovereign's predilection for him. Even Potempkin feared his influence, and from the circumstance of his dying with horrible pains in his bowels, it was pretended that Potempkin gave him poison. Catherine in vain lavished

Catherine successively admitted to her shameless embraces, this was the one whom most she loved, and who approved himself most worthy of her affection. Art has rescued his lovely features from the common oblivion, and their beauty and sweetness are so great, as easily to account for the intensity of the passion with which he inspired his royal mistress. That very fierceness of passion itself, it appears, was afterward the fatal cause of his early and premature death. A fever carried him off, in the course of a year, produced as it was asserted, by his too ardent devotion to the pleasures of the woman who adored him.

Though at this period of her reign, Catherine's foreign and domestic relations were peaceful, yet she determined to resume her hostile intentions toward Turkey. She desired to enter into a closer alliance with Joseph II., the Emperor of Germany. To arrange the basis of their alliance, she requested him to meet her at Mohilef in Poland. During all her fre-

upon him during his sickness the most tender cares. She received his latest breath. She shut herself up for several days, which she passed in the violence of grief. She accused heaven; she would cease to reign; she swore never to love again. Like another queenly Artimesia, she erected over his beloved remains a superb mausoleum, in the garden of her palace. Her affection turned into rage against the unhappy physician who could not save him, and who was obliged to throw himself at his Sovereign's feet to implore pardon for the impotence of his art. *Vide Secret Memoirs of the Court of St. Petersburg London*, 1801 *Vol. I. p.* 114.

quent journeys, it is worthy of remark, that Catherine never intrusted the administration of affairs during her absence, to her son, the Grand Duke. Though by birth the generalissimo of the Russian armies, he never commanded a regiment. Though nominally Grand Admiral of the Baltic, he was never once permitted to visit the fleet at Cronstadt. This conduct on the part of the Empress might seem mysterious to us, did we not know how illy imperial heads reposed on their pillows of down, and how often apprehensions for their safety, and suspicions of the fidelity of their best friends, haunted their restless spirits. During her absence in this instance, she intrusted the government of St. Petersburg, and the administration of her empire to Prince Galitzin

When Catherine reached Mohilef, Joseph II. had preceded her. The pomp and splendour of the Russian Empress, contrasted strangely with the simplicity and plainness observed by the Austrian monarch and his retinue. The latter had even travelled thither incognito under the pseudonym of Count Falkenstein. His aversion to pomp and court etiquette was indeed remarkable. During his journey from Vienna to Mohilef a person always rode one station in advance of the imperial carriages, who announced their approach to the postmaster, ordering him to provide dinner or supper for the approaching company: as for himself, he would be content with a fowl, or a sausage, and a draught of common beer. After taking this refresh-

ment, he would set off for the next station. He then departed with the thanks of the postmaster for apprising him of the approach of the distinguished cavalcade. The reader need scarcely be informed of the fact, that this forerunner was no one else than the Emperor himself.

After the conferences were over, he continued his journey to St. Petersburg. He there visited the port of Cronstadt, and everything that was curious in the gorgeous capital of the Czars,—the arsenals, the dockyards, the manufactories of various kinds, the Academy of Sciences, the temples, and the monuments of art and genius. The result of the deliberations of the two sovereigns was, that they agreed to attack the Turks in concert; to share the spoils between them; to re-establish the ancient republics of Greece. Catherine consented to patronize the barter of Bavaria for the Austrian Netherlands; at the same time engaging to support him against any opposition of the King of Prussia, and the other princes of the German Empire. Joseph II. left St. Petersburg, astonished, as well he might be, at the strange mixture of barbarism and refinement which characterized everything which was presented to his view; nor could he conceive how a woman, who seemed capable of leading the world by her genius, could consent to be so absolutely governed by two of her own subjects; the one as minister, the other as favourite.

CHAPTER XI.

CATHERINE'S MEASURES TO PROMOTE THE ADVANCEMENT OF LITERATURE THROUGHOUT HER DOMINIONS.—THE CULTIVATION OF THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE.—THE STUDY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES.—OF ANCIENT LITERATURE.—OF BELLES-LETTRES.—WRITINGS OF KNAISHIN—OF DERSCHAVIN—OF KHERASKOF—OF VAN WISIN.—CATHERINE'S GREAT MERITS AS A PATRONESS OF LITERATURE AND SCIENCE.

To any one who is interested in the progress of civilization, and of national development, few subjects could possess greater charms, than the state of the arts, of literature, and of sciences, throughout the empire which possessed so extraordinary a ruler as Catherine II. Deceived by the general stigma which has long rested upon Russia, as a nation of rude and uncultivated barbarians, we may imagine that, under the reign of this Empress, they were devoid of all civilization, and were entire strangers to the arts and knowledge. The traces of a superior cultivation which appear in the works of Nestor, and the other historians of the earlier annals of Russia, contradict this impression. The knowledge and use of letters, and the Sclavonian translation of the Bible made in the ninth century; the schools which the Grand Duke Vladimir established at a later date; his own fondness for the fine arts; the poetical

paraphrase of the Psalms, which about that time began to be used in the Greek churches; the civil code which Yaroslaf gave to the Russians about A. D. 1019; the splendour of his court, which even foreigners have commemorated; these and other facts show, that even previous to the period of Peter the Great, the Russians had not been totally immersed in barbarism.

When Catherine II. ascended the throne, she diffused around her a renovated and powerful enthusiasm for national improvement and advancement. She outstripped all her neighbours and rivals, in the rapid progress which she achieved. She patronized men of letters of every branch and name. Accordingly we find, that during her reign, Russia produced more writers distinguished for talent and ability, than she had done at any previous period.

The cultivation of the *national* language first occupied the Empress's attention, and secured her liberal patronage. She ordered school books to be composed and printed in that language. She caused translations to be made in it, of some of the best foreign works in the various departments of literature. She employed learned men who, by their writings, reduced the Russ language to philosophical principles, and to established rules. The productions of good authors began to furnish abundant materials for its enrichment and improvement. Formerly, it had been necessary for Russian writers to coin many words

from foreign languages. Since the era of Catherine II., the Russian language, in consequence of the improvements introduced into the literature of the country, through the writings of learned men, has become sufficiently enriched, so as not to render recourse to other languages necessary, for the expression of the most delicate shades of meaning, which the conception of the writer may require to employ.

Catherine II. patronized the study of *foreign* languages with equal munificence. She maintained Yaerig in Mongolia, for the express purpose of becoming acquainted with their language and literature, and afterward imparting scientific instruction to her subjects upon it. She supported *Leontief* in the same way, with the design of obtaining an acquaintance with the Chinese literature. This *savan* translated many works into Russ, from that language, of a philosophical, political, and historical character. Among these were the works of Confucius, and a description of the towns, revenues, and natural history of China. The value of this department of her labours will appear from the fact, that a portion of the vast dominions of the Empress verged upon the Chinese empire, and that a knowledge of the language and institutions of these neighbours, was of great importance to those of her subjects who were so situated. Nor can we fail to perceive, how comprehensive was that imperial mind, which could grasp within its mighty embrace, the multiform interests of her innumerable subjects,

whether they were inhabitants of Europe or Asia; whether they dwelt upon the Baltic Sea, or under the shadows of the Oral Mountains.

Ancient literature also received the benefit of her patronage. She caused translations to be made of the principal writers of antiquity. She expressed her approbation of works, which were written and published by her own subjects, in the Latin language,—at that time the dialect of the learned throughout Europe. She appropriated in the year 1768, the yearly sum of five thousand rubles, for Russian translations from the classics, and commissioned Counts Shuvaloff and Orlof, to dispose of the sum properly. Among the works which, by this means, were translated into the Russian language, and thus incorporated into the Russian literature, were those of Plato, Hesiod's poems, Homer's Batrachomachia, and his Iliad, Lucian's Dialogues, Diodorus Siculus, and Theophrastus, among the Greeks; and Tacitus, Ovid's Metamorphoses, Terence, Horace's Odes, Cæsar, Cicero, Virgil, and Suetonius, among the Roman writers.

Catherine was also a liberal patroness of the native muse; a department which had been particularly barren previous to her reign. The only poets of any note, anterior to her accession to the throne, were Somonosof, and at his death, the muse seemed to have taken a last farewell of the bleak hills and barren plains of the Northern Scythia, and plumed her wings

for more congenial climes. Catherine discovered in the early productions of Sumarokof, the germs of exalted genius; and she determined to foster the rare treasure. He was particularly successful in the department of the drama. He left behind him, in his writings, however, chaste and elegant models of composition in every department of polite literature. He possessed a lively and cultivated fancy; a refined taste, formed upon the study of the ancient and modern writers; a style purely classical, with great richness of thought. He occupied an honourable niche in the temple of European literature. Catherine, besides many other testimonials of her favour, settled upon him a yearly income of two thousand rubles He died in 1777, at Moscow, a knight of the order of St. Anne

Another subject of the liberal patronage of Catherine, was Knaïshin, who was worthy of the respect with which he inspired her for his genius. In the dramatical works with which he has enriched that department, are found great beauties of composition, a light harmonious versification, and a profound knowledge of the riches and strength of the language. To the most famous productions of this class, must be added his tragedy of Dido, and his comedy of the Boaster. A great number of miscellaneous poems, he has also written; among which are some very well imagined epistles and satires, the translation of the Henriad in verse, and a variety of essays in prose.

One of his successors in this department, and perhaps the most distinguished, was Derschavin, who was respectable as a statesman, a patriot, a philanthropist, as well as a poet. Propriety, elegance, and delicacy of expression, form his peculiar characteristics. The harmony of his diction, and the melody of his sweet and flowing numbers, are inimitable He discovered the way to combine the most luxuriant imagination, with the purest and most cultivated taste. A beautiful poem of his, called the Dream of Menza, has been translated into German by Kotzebue, the celebrated dramatic writer; and those who are competent to judge of the two productions, declare that the German is far inferior to the Russian.

Another poet who flourished under the auspices of Catherine, was the chevalier Kheraskof. His heroic poems, the Rossiad, and the Battle of Tchesme, are the first productions of the nation, in the department of the pure *epic*. His attempts in that high range of poesy have been successful. But he has been equally triumphant in other kinds of composition. He has written tragedies and comedies, which still to this day, keep their honoured place on the Russian stage. He has also published odes, fables, eclogues, which are all highly esteemed. His last performances were Numa Pompilius, an historical romance, in the manner of Telemachus, and Cadmus and Harmonia, a poetic tale.

The last literary favourite of Catherine, whom we shall

mention, was Van Wisin, whose name and family were of Dutch descent, but who had been Russian for several generations. This great poet was the Moliere of the Russian theatre. In him were combined all the qualities of a great dramatic writer. In his best pieces, such as the *Brigadier* and the *Spoiled Child*, an intense interest is kept up; he lashes severely the prevailing prejudices and vices of his age and country; and presents a powerful and instructive moral to the attention of his readers. He is also the author of some elegant translations into Russ.

It is not venturing too far, or too much to say, that if Catherine II. had been placed, by the vicissitudes of fortune, as Empress over a nation of gifted and talented men, such as fell to the lot of some other European sovereigns, she would have been the most splendid and munificent patroness of genius that ever lived; and that she would have caused the richest productions of the human mind to have been elaborated, to instruct, delight, and improve mankind. As it was, being placed over a community by no means remarkable for the genial gifts of nature, but rather deficient in intellectual resources, she deserves great praise for what she did accomplish, under such very unfavourable circumstances.

CHAPTER XII.

DIPLOMATIC INTERCOURSE OF CATHERINE WITH FREDERIC THE GREAT.—DANTZIC.—WAR BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND THE NETHERLANDS.—PROJECT OF OPENING THE NAVIGATION OF THE SCHELDT.—ARGUMENTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE QUESTION.—BREAKING OUT OF HOSTILITIES.—INTERFERENCE OF OTHER EUROPEAN POWERS.—SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE BY NEGOTIATION.

THOUGH Catherine was constantly adding to her vast dominions, by large accessions in every quarter; though she turned all the vicissitudes of war, and all the pacific events of her reign to the aggrandisement of her territory, she yet seemed jealous of the prosperity of others, and of the growth of their power. She had long been uneasy at the resplendent fame of Frederic the Great of Prussia, and of that importance and influence which his great talents gave him in the affairs of Europe. From the first partition of Poland, Frederic had constantly been making encroachments on the privileges of the city of Dantzic, and had oppressed it to such a degree, that it was almost compelled to abandon its commerce, and even to throw itself into his arms, and annex itself to his dominions. Catherine was the more offended at the prospect of such a result, inasmuch as she had herself entertained ambitious de-

signs in regard to that important city, and had only been induced to abandon the project which she entertained, for the present, in consequence of the expressions which were uttered by the government of France to the Chancellor Vorontzof. This statesman had long been engaged in an epistolary correspondence with Tercier, who was intrusted, in conjunction with the Count de Broglio, with the secret political correspondence of Louis XV

The magistrates of Dantzic were artfully invited by the minister Stackelberg, to implore the protection and the interposition of Catherine. She immediately wrote to the King of Prussia, offering her mediation in the affair, which step had the effect of retarding for a time, the fate which afterward overwhelmed that city.

Troubles of another sort now disturbed a different portion of Europe, to which the attention of the Empress was attracted Joseph II. of Austria had formed the design of opening the navigation of the Scheldt. To this measure the Dutch were resolutely opposed; who used every means to engage Frederic to support, by force of arms, their privileges. Catherine declared on this occasion, that she was determined to support and maintain the pretensions of her friend and ally, the Emperor, with whom in the preceding year, she had renewed her treaty of alliance. Upon this the Dutch, whose cannon had already insulted the Austrian flag, dreading an exclusion

from the ports of the Baltic, determined to negotiate rather than to fight. The subject attracted the public attention in every port of Europe; and few instances have occurred, in which the opinions of men varied so much as they did in reference to the merits of the conflict in which these powerful sovereigns were then engaged

The grounds on which the Emperor supported his claims, were sufficiently plausible and specious. The former opulence, splendour, and wealth of Antwerp, depended on the opening of the navigation of the Scheldt. The decline of her prosperity was, with certainty, to be ascribed to no other cause than the removal of her former privileges on that river The closing of the navigation was represented as the result of the avarice and ambition of the inhabitants of Amsterdam, who thereby monopolized all the commerce which had before belonged to Antwerp, and was thus rising to splendour upon her ruins. The Scheldt was represented as the most magnificent river in Europe; that its beauty was unrivalled; and that its appropriation to promote the ambitious ends of one single city, was an outrage on justice, on humanity, and the treaties and the rights of nations.—Arguments equally potent were arrayed on the other side of the question. The States declared that it was absurd, in the present state of mankind, to refer to what were called the natural rights of men, in order to overthrow existing social compacts between them, and those political cove-

nants between nations, which are the foundations of all public and private property. What confusion would Europe present, it was urged, if all its governments were obliged to recur to original principles of right and wrong, and to the laws of nature; and to relinquish the various acquisitions which they had made, by conquest and treaty, by force and fraud, through the revolutions of a long succession of ages! It would be to loosen all the bands which unite mankind together; to throw them back again into a state of savage nature; and to render the world a mighty chaos of political and social disorder. It was also urged that the decline of the commerce of Antwerp might be ascribed to other causes beside her exclusion from the navigation of the Scheldt. These causes were various, owing to the faults and vices of the inhabitants of that city; and because the advantages and merits of Amsterdam for commerce, were in themselves far superior to those of which Antwerp could boast; that the latter city had suffered the calamities of war; that she had groaned under the despotism, cruelty, and persecution of the Spaniards, which compelled many of her most valuable and opulent citizens to remove their persons and their wealth by flight, to more congenial and tolerant climes. It was observed, as a curious circumstance in connexion with this subject, that Spain, the sovereign of Antwerp, had been no less interested than Holland, in the measure of shutting up the Scheldt; because, as the celebrated Grand Pensionary, De

Witt, declared in his memoirs, the greatness and opulence of Antwerp were an eyesore, an object of jealousy, to their Spanish rulers, who governed only to destroy.

The States were determined to resist the proposed attempt of the Emperor to open their river to free navigation, thus exposing the whole interior of their country to foreign invasion and aggression. A certain amount of marine force, however, was necessary to the accomplishment of this purpose, which their enemy, the Emperor, did not possess. It was, however, rumoured, that as that sovereign and the Empres. of Russia were now united by a treaty of alliance, whereby Joseph II. covenanted to support her in her aggressions upon Turkey, the Crimea, and the Euxine, so would she now assist him in his encroachments upon the privileges of the Dutch States; and that inasmuch as Catherine had no port in the Mediterranean, she wished to possess at least the use of the Scheldt for the transport of arms, and as a station for her navy

Two vessels of the Emperor were employed to make an experiment upon the conduct of the Dutch, with respect to the navigation of the Scheldt; and to ascertain whether they would persevere at all hazards, in the assertion of their rights; or whether they would yield to fear and apprehension of the great power of their opponent. Every means was used, at Paris and at Brussels, to induce the Emperor to abandon this method of ascertaining the intentions and final disposition of

the States. But all these efforts were vain. He determined to persevere, and confirmed the threat of Count Belgiojoso, by declaring, that he would consider the first insult offered to his flag, on this occasion, as a public and formal declaration of war, on the part of the republic.

The equipment and preparations of these vessels were evidently such, as to attract the attention of all Europe to this singular transaction. One of them was to proceed down the Scheldt, from Antwerp to the sea. The other vessel was to ascend from the sea, up the river, on its course from Ostend to Antwerp. The former of these vessels, in her passage downward, received a broadside from a Dutch cutter; and the vessel coming up from Ostend, was stopped in her attempt to pass from the sea; although in the latter case, no shots were fired, nor blood shed. After these events, a final rupture was inevitable, although some time elapsed before active operations commenced, in consequence of the absence of the Emperor from Vienna, and the great distance of his troops. An army of sixty thousand men were preparing to march from the Austrian hereditary dominions. Great trains of artillery, and other apparatus of war, were now in motion. The chief hinderance of the Emperor, was the fact, that in the passage of his troops, he was compelled to avoid passing through the territories of the King of Prussia. The Republic summoned her best efforts to prepare for the

approaching storm, which portended to be one of great fury and destructiveness.

At this crisis, Catherine II. took an active part against the States. She placed a large number of troops at the command of her ally, the Emperor; who were to aid him in destroying the liberties and the rights of the republic. Nevertheless, she presumed to act, or to assume the position of a mediator. But her offer was rejected by the States, and she became then identified as the determined friend of their enemy, the Emperor.

But the rest of Europe were not disposed to permit one nation thus to become the victim of the selfish coalition of other and more powerful nations. France and Prussia determined to interpose. Prince Henry of Prussia now paid his long-promised visit to the court of Versailles. Sweden was added to the coalition; and even the Ottoman power was induced to shake off its habitual and deathlike lethargy; to take an interest in European politics; and to repay the Emperor and Empress, the long score of grievances and wrongs which they had inflicted on the Porte.

The States of Holland, from the formidable power of their allies, began to be themselves formidable. Their situation and prospects were not near so desperate, as they seemed to be at the commencement of hostilities. They began to assume a tone and an attitude of defiance. An European war would

inevitably be the result of the active prosecution of the conflict which had been begun. Both parties began to see the propriety of negotiation, rather than the prosecution of the war, which would cost each of them a large amount and expenditure of blood and treasure. Negotiations for a settlement of the dispute between the Emperor and Holland, were commenced at Paris, in 1785, under the auspices of the French Prime Minister. Toward the latter end of June, Barons Wassenær and Leyden proceeded to the Hague, as deputies from the Republic, to the court of Vienna. The first preliminary to an accommodation, which the Emperor required, was an apology for the insult offered to his flag. He regarded this, as monarchs too often do, as of greater importance than the settlement of a treaty by which the commercial interests of his subjects would be promoted. The deputies of the Republic were instructed to offer an apology to the wounded pride of the Emperor, for that insult. After this essential preliminary had been settled, the representatives of the belligerent powers proceeded to the details of the negotiation. A treaty of peace was established between them, in which both parties made mutual concessions; and the horrors of a war, the apprehension of which had excited and interested all Europe, were happily avoided. Thus Catherine had leisure to devote her continued attention solely to the affairs of her own empire.

CHAPTER XIII.

BOBRINSKY, CATHERINE'S NATURAL SON.—HIS ABANDONED CHARACTER.—THE COLOSSAL STATUE OF PETER THE GREAT AT ST. PETERSBURG.—HISTORY OF ITS ERECTION.—CATHERINE CONQUERS THE CRIMEA.—HER TREATY WITH GUSTAVUS III. OF SWEDEN.—HER WAR WITH THE TURKS.—GREGORY ORLOF.—BEZROBODKO.—LANSKOI.—HIS SUDDEN DEATH.—CATHERINE'S INCONSOLABLE GRIEF.

At the period of the Empress's first attachment to Gregory Orlof, she had borne him a son, whom she named Bobrinsky. He was born at such a distance, in point of time, after the death of her husband, that no doubt could exist as to his paternity. Catherine was much attached to this son, and had sent him abroad, for the purpose of completing his education under the most favourable auspices.

Had Bobrinsky possessed ordinary prudence, he might have arrived at the first dignities of the empire. But unhappily, during his residence at Leipsic and Lausanne, he had contracted bad habits, which rendered him a source of great apprehension and solicitude to his affectionate parent. All the efforts employed to improve him, in a moral, as well as an intellectual respect, seemed utterly useless. Catherine now wished to place

him under the care of some person of suitable learning and prudence, who would act as his constant guide and protector. To find such a one, Catherine applied to Count Betzkoï, Marshal of the court, who assured the Empress that his own son-in-law, Colonel Ribas, was the most suitable person for that office. She confided in his representations, and Ribas had been appointed Bobrinsky's tutor and guardian. But time proved him to be utterly unfit for the office he had assumed. Himself dissipated, arrogant, and licentious, he had infused the same bad qualities into his pupil.

Catherine was much distressed at the hopeless and abandoned morals of her son, whose excesses became now so great, that she herself was constantly exposed thereby to shame and disgrace She at length determined to send him into a sort of exile at Revel. At this place he remained for many years, and still resided there under her strict command, at the period of his mother's death. Shortly after the accession of the Grand Duke, under the title of Paul I., he sent for Bobrinsky to come to St. Petersburg. He there publicly acknowledged him as his brother, and restored to him the palace of Gregory Orlof, situated on the Moïka, which had been the scene of the early attachment of the Empress and that favourite. Bobrinsky afterwards contracted an advantageous marriage with a Livonian lady, and passed into a quiet obscurity, consonant with his talents and his character.

This Empress possessed strong domestic affections, and was deeply interested in the education and happiness of her grandchildren. For them she wrote with her own hand, several small works,—the Sketch of Russian History, Tales of the Czarovitch Chlor, the Library of the Grand Dukes. These were all interesting sketches in political history, natural history, and such other branches of knowledge as were most attractive and instructive to children. They were afterward collected together, under the title of *Bibliotheque des Grand-ducs Alexandre et Constantin.* By the dignity and affectionateness of her manner, she inspired her descendants with great deference and respect. She conversed familiarly with their tutor in their presence, and frequently gave him directions as to the performance of his duty. The subject of instruction one morning had been the form of government in Switzerland, on which the tutor, M. La Harpe, discoursed in accordance with his republican opinions. On returning to their studies the next day, the princes read at the bottom of the exercise, in the handwriting of the Empress, as follows: *M. La Harpe, continuez vos leçons de cette sorte; vos sentimens me plaisent beaucoup.*

The year 1782 was made memorable by the inauguration of the famous colossal statue of Peter I., a work in which the munificence of Catherine was so ably supported by the mechanical genius of Stephen Falconet. She had resolved to erect a splendid

statue to the memory of that great Prince, and wrote to Paris to Falconet, to come and execute the monument. She then conceived the idea of having for a pedestal of the statue, a colossal rock, of rude and rugged form. This symbol was to indicate to posterity, whence the heroic legislator had set out in his career, and what stupendous obstacles he had overcome This sublime idea met with universal approbation. The next step was to find the mass of material suitable to the purpose, and consonant with the design. In a soil like that of Northern Russia, it was no easy task to obtain such materials.

Accident favoured the accomplishment of an enterprise, which might otherwise never have been consummated. Near the village of Lachta, in a morass on the shores of the Gulf of Finland, a peasant discovered an immense rock, as remarkable for its shape as its size. On its being measured by the artist, it was found to be twenty-one feet thick, by forty-two in length, and thirty-four in breadth. The very idea of moving so immense a mass, was calculated at first to deter the boldest resolution But the genius of Catherine was not accustomed to yield to obstacles, however vast or stupendous. Her whole reign had been a series of triumphs over difficulties greater than this. She therefore determined to remove that rock, from its immemorial bed in the marshes of the Gulf of Finland, to the centre of St. Petersburg.

To accomplish this, it was necessary first to remove the ground

around its foundations. The workmen immediately discovered a propitious omen at the outset of their labours. The rock which reared its lofty head above the surface of the morass, was not the summit of a mount, whose base descended deeply into the bowels of the earth It was a detached and separate mass of stone; which rested upon the surface of the ground, wholly isolated and disconnected from any other substance. It was also discovered, that throughout that whole coast and region, for many miles around, not another stone, either large or small, was anywhere to be found. The interior of the rock was also remarkable. A stroke of lightning had riven it on one side. On knocking off the shattered fragment, instead of a homogeneous mass, a collection of all sorts of valuable stones appeared; crystals, agates, topazes, cornelians, amethysts, presented to the astonished observers a sight not more surprising than magnificent. Thousands of these were afterward cut and polished into bracelets, rings, snuff-boxes, and heads of canes, which found a rapid sale, not only among people of fashion, but throughout the whole empire.

Five months were employed by the workmen in raising the mass above the ground, and placing it on grooves filled with cannon balls, to be dragged by windlasses toward St. Petersburg. The stupendous mechanism intended for the conveyance of this rock, was invented by Count Carburg. A solid road was first made from the stone to the shore. Brass slips were

then inserted under the stone, to run upon cannon balls, in metal grooves. The windlasses were worked by four hundred men. Each day they removed it two hundred fathoms toward the shore. On its passage toward its destination, the rock must pass over heights, cross morasses, be conveyed over rivers, travel down the Neva, being placed upon the water-transport, be disembarked again, and be drawn by land to the place of its destination. The weight of this enormous mass was three millions two hundred thousand pounds. The largest obelisk known, that which the son of Constantine the Great had conveyed from Alexandria to Rome, weighs only nine hundred and seven thousand pounds. This is but one-third of the weight of the rock of St. Petersburg. The history of the mechanical arts knows nothing of any enterprise of this sort, so stupendous as that achieved by the resolute genius of Catherine.

The equestrian statue of Peter the Great, which surmounts the rock, is itself a masterpiece. The resemblance of the features is said to be excellent. The artist Falconet represents the Russian hero on horseback, in the act of ascending the steep rock, which he proposes to surmount. Peter is crowned with laurels, and wears an Asiatic dress. He extends his right arm with great dignity, while with the left he holds the reins of his charger, whose beauty of form, and boldness of attitude, secure the admiration of every beholder. The steed stands

only on his hinder feet; while his fore legs are thrown out fearlessly above the summit of the rock. A brazen serpent, which he tramples and crushes beneath him, while it serves to give strength and solidity to the whole group, at the same time symbolizes the destruction of every opponent to the triumphant fortunes and genius of the great hero. The stone is grounded on piles driven into the earth in the great square of the capital. It bears the appropriate inscription: *Petro Primo Catharina Secunda.* The monument was uncased and disclosed to the public on the 7th of August, 1782. The event was solemnized by the happy Empress by the distribution of gold and silver medals, and by a ukase which discharged all prisoners for debt, and conferred various privileges on her subjects. The artist Falconet had spent nine years upon the work. The whole expense was estimated at four hundred and twenty-four thousand and six hundred rubles.

In 1783, after various hostile demonstrations between the Russian armies, and the inhabitants of the Crimea, Catherine proclaimed a decree, in which that country was for ever annexed to her dominions. The Crim-Tartars have ever since been subjected to the Russian throne. The ambitious Empress now resolved to declare war again against the Ottoman power. But she was fearful that while her armies were engaged at the southern extremity of her empire, she might be harassed by Gustavus III., the sovereign of Sweden. To avert this

danger, and to establish a treaty of alliance with him, she proposed a private interview, which took place at Fredericksham, a small strongly fortified town on the Gulf of Finland, and the last extremity of her empire in the direction of Sweden She repaired thither in a yacht. She was attended, among others, by her favourite Lanskoï, and the Princess Dashkof. The Swedish monarch was also accompanied by a numerous and splendid suite.

With her usual forethought, Catherine had ordered two contiguous houses to be engaged, which were furnished with great elegance, and between which a gallery of communication had been constructed. One of these houses was occupied by herself; the other by the King of Sweden; so that during the four days that the sovereigns remained at Fredericksham, they freely discoursed together, as often as they had occasion. The Empress engaged a Danish painter to execute a picture, in which she and Gustavus III. are represented as sitting and conversing together, which, with her accustomed liberality, she presented to the Swedish sovereign. The parties signed an agreement of peace between them; each party being respectively bound to remain neutral toward any power, against which the other might choose to declare war. She also promised to assist him in his designs to gain possession of the throne of Norway. Before the sovereigns and their suites left Fredericksham, they gave magnificent presents to their attendants. Gus-

tavus decorated the favourite Lanskoï with the order of the Polar Star; and on his return to Sweden he sent to the Princess Dashkof a diploma of the Academy of Stockholm.

Catherine had made vast military preparations for her approaching conflict with the Porte; yet the Divan determined, if possible, to evade her onslaught, by trying even the last resources of negotiation and treaty. By a new treaty, therefore, signed at Constantinople, the Sultan acknowledged Catherine's sovereignty over the Crimea, the isle of Taman, her right to the dominion of the Euxine; and to the free passage of the Dardanelles. She thus acquired, by her able diplomacy, and without the sacrifice of either blood or treasure, an immense territory, with a million and a half of subjects. She restored to the Crimea and the Kuban their ancient classic names. The former of these she called Taurida, and the latter the Caucasus; the memorable *locale* of those beautiful and immortal productions of the Grecian muse, the "Iphigenia in Tauris," and the "Prometheus Bound."

Meanwhile the fortunes of Potempkin advanced with those of his mistress, with whom his influence in the administration of her empire was now unlimited. He was constantly adding additional palaces and estates to his already vast wealth. The Empress honoured him with the surname of the Taurian, inasmuch as, by his diplomacy, that country had been added to her dominions. She conferred upon him the dignity of Grand

Admiral of the Euxine, and built for him a magnificent palace in St. Petersburg, called the Taurian Palace, of prodigious size and splendour.

In 1784, she was called upon to mourn the death of two of her oldest friends, and the most able supporters of her throne. One of these was Count Panin, the chief of the conspiracy which had placed her on the throne. He died of the grief and mortification, which had harassed him from the moment in which Potempkin had successfully resisted his influence in the council, and had deprived him of the supreme management of affairs. He had become at length a stranger to all peace of mind, except that which is found in the long silence and repose of the tomb. The other friend of the Empress who about the same time passed from the world, was Gregory Orlof, her first and most aspiring favourite. He too, at length, fell a victim to the pangs of mortified ambition and despised love. He had remained in possession of all his dignities and wealth, and had married a young and beautiful wife. But his wretchedness was so great, that he passed nearly all the latter years of his life in travelling. In 1782 he stopped at Lausanne, where he lost his wife, to whom he was much attached. This event increased his melancholy. He returned to court, but it was only to convince his friends, that his once vigorous mind had sunk beneath the weight of its gloom, and was but the sad wreck of what it once had been. At one mo-

ment he would indulge in an extravagant gayety—the next he would break out with the most terrific violence, filling every one with horror, and plunging the Empress herself into the deepest grief. He retired to Moscow. There, it is said, that the bleeding shade of Peter III. pursued him everywhere, affrighting his mind by day, haunting him in the troubled visions of the night, ever aiming at him an avenging dart. He expired in horrid agonies of remorse and despair.

History teems with innumerable proofs of the unbounded selfishness and treachery of courtiers. How bitter must have been the reflections of Catherine, when she discovered that there were men in her court, base enough to excite, if possible, even her own son and heir apparent, the Grand Duke, to rebellion against her! This event occurred under the following circumstances.

His Imperial Highness usually spent the autumn at Gatschina, a country seat distant eighteen versts from the capital. All at once a report was mysteriously spread abroad that he was about to build a town there, and would give liberty to all who would come and live in it. The consequence was, that peasants in multitudes came hastening from various portions of the empire to partake of these benefits. The prince at once detected the object of this singular movement, and had the prudence and good sense to crush it. He kindly dismissed the disaffected, thereby destroying an incipient revolt, from

which, no doubt, great benefits were expected by its unprincipled instigators

Bezborodko had succeeded Panin in his important offices, and had secured the confidence of Catherine by the faithfulness with which he had discharged his duties. Connected with the family of Vorontzof, one of whom was the Princess Dashkof, and the other the former mistress of Peter III., he was the secret and determined enemy of Potemkin. They had not yet however come to an open rupture.

Lanskoï, the present favourite, became each day more dear to his royal mistress. His education had been much neglected. and Catherine took delight in cultivating his mind, and imparting to him the accomplishments of learning. He soon became as remarkable for the elegance of his manners, and the excellence of his knowledge, as he already was for the beauty of his person, and the sweetness of his disposition. Her love for this youth was ardent and sincere. She admired in him the fair creation of her own affection and intelligence. The delight which she took in his society, was unhappily destined to be of short continuance.

He was attacked with a violent fever, resulting from a cause already stated in a previous part of this work, which carried him off in the flower of his age. He expired in the arms of her Majesty, who lavished upon him, until the last moment, all the tenderness which the most passionate and devoted love

could inspire. As soon as she had closed his eyes, she abandoned herself to the deepest sorrow. The imperial apartments were no longer the scene of joy and pleasure, as they once had been. They now resembled a cheerless and lonely desert. Catherine for several days refused all sustenance, and remained for three months confined to her palace. Immediately after his death, she threw herself upon his bed, and seemed indifferent to life or death. The Grand Duke and Duchess, hearing of her desperate grief, drove immediately to her palace, and desired admission to her apartment. She refused to admit them to her presence, and they returned without seeing her She afterward erected, as already stated, a beautiful mausoleum to his memory, in the gardens of the imperial palace, which was visible through the trees, from the windows of her private apartment. More than two years after his death, accidentally walking near this monument with some ladies of her court, they observed her immediately to shed an abundance of tears The fortune of Lanskoï, in consequence of the liberal affection of his mistress, was estimated at seven millions of rubles All this treasure he bequeathed again, to her from whom it had emanated. She refused to receive it, and presented it to the sisters of the man whom she had loved so fondly and so well.

CHAPTER XIV.

SECRET MARRIAGE OF CATHERINE TO POTEMPKIN.—YERMOLOF BECOMES FAVOURITE.—HIS INGRATITUDE TO CATHERINE.—YERMOLOF DISMISSED.—MOMONOF BECOMES FAVOURITE.—CATHERINE PURCHASES VOLTAIRE'S LIBRARY.—HER CELEBRATED JOURNEY TO THE CRIMEA.—THE PRINCE DE LIGNE.—WAR BETWEEN RUSSIA AND TURKEY.—WAR WITH SWEDEN.—CATHERINE VICTORIOUS AGAINST BOTH.

After the death of Lanskoï, the affections of the woman for some time overpowered the energies of the sovereign, in the Empress, and she seemed to find no amelioration of her grief. Potempkin was the only person who had free access to her person.* His influence with her increased from day to day,

* The character of this remarkable man has been transmitted to posterity in the following elaborate, and perhaps not overdrawn description, by one of the most eminent men of his age, the Prince de Ligne. Though lengthy, it is worthy of being preserved entire. Says the Prince:

"I beheld a commander, who, with the appearance of extreme indolence, is eternally occupied; who has no writing desk but his knees, no comb but his fingers; who passes his life on a couch, yet never closes his eyes, through the anxiety of his zeal for his mistress whom he adores, and through fear that every cannon shot of which he does not see the direction, may cost the life of some of his soldiers. Trembling for others but fearless for himself; anxious and alarmed

and so complete was the supremacy which he had secured over her mind, that from gratitude and real affection, she resolved to bind him to her by indissoluble ties, and secretly gave him

at the approach of danger, but meeting it with gayety, he is most cheerful and decided when giving his orders under the fire of a battery. He is melancholy in the midst of pleasure; unhappy from excess of good fortune; satiated with everything; easily offended, morose, and inconstant, but ready to ask pardon for the uneasiness he may occasion, and to repair the injustice he has committed. He thinks himself sincerely pious, and is, in truth, very much afraid of the devil, whom he represents to himself as even bigger and more powerful than a Prince Potempkin, and alternately embraces a crucifix or a mistress. Prodigal in squandering the wealth which is profusely showered on him by the Empress; more willing to bestow than to pay; ever creating palaces and gardens, and abandoning them when finished; giving way to every impulse; adopting every prejudice, and rejecting it with the same facility; talking divinity to generals, and tactics to archbishops; never opening a book, but reading the thoughts of all who approach him, and eliciting their opinions by contradictions; with an air and manners the most morose and repulsive, or the most conciliating and agreeable, he sometimes appears like the proudest representative of an Asiatic despot, and sometimes as the most fascinating courtier of Louis XIV. With a harsh and forbidding exterior, he has a tender and affectionate heart. Fantastic about his house, his meals, and his rest; capricious in all his tastes; wishing for everything like a child; bearing the severest privations like a great man; sober, with the appearance of gluttony; biting his nails, or gnawing an apple or a turnip; scolding or laughing; mimicking or swearing; he calls around him twenty aides-de-camp at a time, and dismisses them with or without some unimportant message. At one moment appearing to tremble at every breeze, he will, at the next,

her hand. The marriage was never publicly promulgated. The union of interest and of affection between these two extraordinary lovers, doubtless continued unimpaired for some time; but the bonds of wedlock were unable permanently to restrain either of them. They mutually wearied of each other's society, and looked around for newer and stronger attachments.

The Princess Dashkof now conceived the ambitious purpose of raising her son to the office of imperial favourite; and for

brave the extremes of heat and cold, without drawers, in his shirt, over which is buttoned a full uniform with all its embroidery, his naked feet thrust into a pair of black slippers covered with spangles Thus accoutred, without a hat or cap, I have seen him more than once in the midst of the enemy's fire; at other times, in a wretched night-gown, and occasionally in a superb tunic, with his three stars and ribands, and the portrait of the Empress set round with the most costly diamonds, whose splendour was well calculated to attract a shower of bullets. At home, his air slovenly, careless, and crouching; at the head of the troops he is erect, colossal, majestic, like Agamemnon towering above the Kings of Greece. What, then, was his magic? Genius, native genius; a strong understanding, an excellent memory: that acuteness which detects artifices without the cunning which practises them; a character, capricious yet seductive; elevation of soul, abundant generosity, with much grace and discrimination in dispensing favours; the talent of guessing what he does not know, and an intuitive knowledge of the characters of men." *Vide Vol. II. p.* 40, *of* ***L****ettres et Pensées du Maréchal Prince de Ligne, publiées par Madame la Baronne de Staël Holstein: contenant des Anecdotes inédites sur Joseph II., Catherine II., Frederic le Grand, Rousseau, Voltaire, &c., &c., et des Remarques intéressantes sur les Turcs.* 2 tom. 12mo. Londres, Dulau. 1808.

a moment she seemed about to be successful in her intrigues. The young Prince Dashkof was tall, graceful, and well formed; calculated to produce a favourable impression on the susceptible mind of the Empress. He was also highly educated, having pursued his studies at Edinburgh, under the guidance of Professors Robinson, Stewart, and Millar. But he was self-important, and displayed an unpleasing consciousness of his own merits. He had the misfortune to offend Potempkin, and his fate was sealed. That minister immediately sent successively, two subaltern officers of the guards to Catherine, with some trifling commission. These were named Yermolof and Momonof. She had a fair opportunity of observing both, and she decided in favour of the former. A ball was given at court next day. Young Dashkof was present, and displayed great magnificence. The courtiers imagined his triumph was at hand, and already paid him those marks of deference which are so readily accorded to those who may be the favourites of Kings and Empresses. Even Potempkin appeared to lavish his condescension upon him. The Princess Dashkof herself was delighted to see the deference of the powerful minister, and wrote to him, desiring him to admit her nephew, the young Count Butterlin, into the number of his aides-de-camp. Potempkin maliciously replied, that the last vacancy had just been given to Yermolof The same day, to her great mortifi

cation and that of her son, they beheld that favourite, for the first time standing behind the Empress's chair, at the palace.

Catherine, employed as she was, with the cares of state, and with the blandishments of pleasure, did not forget the religious interests of her subjects. She tolerated and protected all religions. She commanded clergymen of all denominations to live in harmony throughout her dominions. Among her subjects were persons of every religious persuasion. Armenians, Lutherans, Reformed, Catholics, Moravians, the Greek established church, and the English Episcopalians. Foreigners of all sects of religion contracted marriages with the Greek Christians, and with each other, without annoyance from their religious relations. The Empress had favoured her Catholic subjects by appointing an Archbishop, and establishing a seminary of Jesuits at Mohilef. She also in the same way protected her Mahommedan subjects in the Crimea, in the practice of their religion. By her express orders, her confessor gave a grand entertainment once a year, at his house, to all the ecclesiastics of every persuasion at St. Petersburg. This event usually occurred on the sixth of January, and there were fifteen or sixteen denominations, all in their several ecclesiastical dresses, duly represented. The metropolitan Archbishop of St. Petersburg always presided on these occasions. The general conversation was usually carried on in the

Latin language. The whole expense of these fraternal entertainments was defrayed by the Empress. During her reign the offices of religion were performed in her capital, in fourteen different languages.

The year 1785, which saw the sudden elevation of Yermolof to the position of favourite, also witnessed his fall. This event was the result of his own absurd imprudence. In person he was tall, exceedingly fair in his complexion, rather heavy and apathetic in his figure. He was also jealous to the last degree. He soon behaved ungratefully to Potempkin, to whom he owed his good fortune, and embraced every opportunity to injure him. The Empress, at first influenced by Yermolof, showed some coldness to her minister. The favourite, however, little knew the mighty power of the man whom he outraged and braved. The latter determined on his ruin. In an interview with Catherine, Potempkin declared himself hurt at her sudden coldness, and haughtily said to her; "Madam, there is but one alternative; you must either dismiss this white negro (so nicknamed from his fair complexion, which scarcely seemed natural), or I shall not again enter the palace." The same day Yermolof received orders to enter on his travels, and Momonof was promoted to his place.

Voltaire had not long been dead, when Catherine commissioned her agent at Paris to purchase his library for her.

Madame Denis, to whom it had been bequeathed, declared that she would not sell it; but that she would willingly present it to the Empress. Upon this her majesty wrote to her in grateful terms, thanking her with great dignity and felicity of expression, for the obligation conferred. She also presented to her, through her correspondent, M. Grimm, gifts which exceeded in value the worth of the library. She also purchased the library of D'Alembert, with the treasures of which she enriched her own collection.

In 1787 Catherine accomplished her celebrated journey or progress to the Crimea. The object of this tour was to take possession in form of the crown of that country, which had been subjugated by her victorious arms; to overawe the surrounding nations by the splendour of her retinue; and even to conduct her grandson Constantine to the capital of the Ottoman Empire, upon whose throne she determined to place him. The sudden sickness of the Prince, however, prevented the accomplishment of that part of the plan which referred to himself. The Empress however, held a conference with the King of Poland, during her journey, which was important in its consequences. She also inspired her new subjects with respect and admiration for the mighty sovereign under whose control the fortunes of war had placed them. The vastness of her original design was very much diminished in consequence of the absence of the Grand Duke Constantine The

opinion generally prevailed among the statesmen of Europe, that Catherine had resolved upon the expulsion of the Turks from Europe; and all her policy for many years, in reference to the Ottoman power, tended to confirm that supposition. She set out accompanied by her ladies of honour, her favourite Momonof, some of her courtiers, and by the ministers of France and Austria. The sledges travelled night and day. Large fires were lighted along the road, and immense multitudes assembled to witness the royal cortege.

On the sixth day of her journey, the Empress arrived at Smolensk. Fifteen days after, she made her entry into Kief, where the Polish nobility who were favourable to the Russian interests, were assembled to meet her. Potempkin, Romantzof, and other distinguished ornaments of her court, were also present at Kief. On the sixth of May, the conference took place between the Empress, and her former favourite, the King of Poland, on whom she had bestowed the crown, and who had once been the object of her youthful affections. The meeting between the now aged monarchs, was full of interest. Three-and-twenty years had transpired since last they met, and many had been the changes and vicissitudes of fortune which they had experienced in the interval. Their royal heads had not always reposed in peace upon their downy pillows. It is said, that their first interview, in the presence of their respective suites, was cold and formal. Time had made sad

havoc with the youthful ardour and attachment of each. But afterward, at a private interview which took place between the sovereigns, Catherine became somewhat affected at the tender reminiscences which the Polish King recalled to her recollection. Catherine, ever liberal and gracious, decorated him with the ribbon of the order of St. Andrew. They also dined together. On getting up from the table, Stanislaus took the fan and gloves of the Empress from the hands of the page who held them, and presented them to her majesty. Catherine immediately took the King's hat, which was held by his page, and moved it towards him. "Ah, madam," said he, "you have formerly given me a much richer one." He alluded to the magnificent present of the crown which he wore, and which he owed to her generous affection.

Prince Potempkin for the first time saw the Polish monarch on this occasion. The interview is said to have been highly agreeable to both parties. It was to the favourable impression which Stanislaus Augustus then made on the minister of Catherine, that he was indebted for the preservation of his crown for some years longer.

During this conference, the Empress also for the first time saw General Suwarrof, who afterward became so celebrated in the annals of Russian warfare. While every one was asking some favour from the generous Empress, he alone asked nothing. She said to him, "And you, General, do you want

nothing?" He replied: "I ask from your majesty but three rubles to pay for my lodgings." This sanguinary warrior never began a battle, without first repeatedly making the sign of the cross.

The passage of the Empress down the Dnieper was a continual triumph.* Villages were constructed along the shores, filled with peasants handsomely dressed. The passage of the fleet was proclaimed everywhere, by the acclamations of her numerous subjects. Joseph II., the Emperor of Austria, met her at Kherson. Here Catherine lodged at the Admiralty, where a throne had been erected for her use, which cost fourteen thousand rubles. This is a large and opulent city, with a splendid and capacious harbour. As her majesty was traversing the several portions of the city, she read with pleasure on the eastern gate, a Greek inscription in these significant words: *This is the road to Constantinople!* The

* *The Prince de Ligne*, who accompanied Catherine on this tour, in quality of French Minister, gives some interesting details respecting her, in his memoirs. He says the Empress left presents in every considerable town of 100,000 rubles. During two months, he was employed, being in the same carriage with her, in throwing out money to the attendant crowds. Close by his side in the coach, there was a large bag, filled with ducats. The inhabitants along the route being assembled around her carriage, he showered the gold upon them as they rapidly rode by. In this way, she distributed money to the value of some millions of livres. *Vide Lettres et Pensées du Prince de Ligne, Vol. II. p.* 120.

city was crowded with an immense multitude of foreigners: Greeks, Tartars, French, Spaniards, Poles, English, Germans. Among the persons who resorted to the court of Catherine, was a Grecian lady of extraordinary beauty and grace, Madame de Witt. Her charms obtained the mastery over Potempkin, and snatched him entirely away from the crowd of beauties who were contending for his princely favours. She obtained from the minister, for her husband, the government of the city of Kherson. This did not prevent her from committing infidelities to her benefactor. Her mother had been a poor tradeswoman, at the seraglio in Constantinople. On pretence of visiting her, she carried on an intrigue with M. Choiseul, in the hotel de France. After the death of Potempkin she attached herself to Count Felix Potocky; but at the solicitation of the Count's wife, Catherine confined Madame de Witt in a convent.

The Empress continued her visit to the inland parts of the Crimea. She was received with great pomp by the respective khans, through whose provinces she passed; and she herself was assiduous in gaining the affections of the people. On her return she was conducted to Pultowa, the scene of the celebrated defeat of Charles XII. by Peter the Great. She was here greeted with a spectacle worthy of the magnificence of Potempkin. She beheld two armies drawn out in battle array. They approached. They engaged; and the various

evolutions of the battle were made accurately to resemble those which occurred in the real engagement between those two sovereigns. During its progress, the fault of the Swedes which lost them the battle, was carefully imitated. Catherine then made this observation: "See on what small matters the fates of Empires and of millions are made to depend. Had it not been for this single blunder, even we had not been here to-day." Joseph II. who was still present with Catherine, was charmed with her society, and promised to aid her in any attempt she should ever make to place her grandson Constantine upon the Turkish throne. Yet he could not refrain from expressing his surprise at the influence exercised over the Empress by her favourite Momonof. His arrogance and vanity were unbounded. When playing at whist, when the favourite was one of the party, he frequently employed the chalk used for marking the progress of the game, in drawing rude pictures; while the sovereign, with the cards in her hand, obligingly waited till he had finished his scrawl to proceed with the game. These trifling incidents often reveal the true relations and weaknesses of the great.

Potempkin, however, was determined on a war with the Porte, and exerted his utmost to induce the Turks to commence hostilities. Though burdened with honours, though wearing titles, dignities, and crosses of knighthood, he still desired to procure the grand ribbon of the order of St. George.

To obtain this decoration, it was necessary that he should command an army; that he should gain a victory; and that he should be crowned as a great conqueror. Little cared he for the multitude of lives which must be sacrificed, to gratify his inordinate ambition. Driven to desperation, the Turks at length declared war, and both parties prepared for hostilities.

The Sultan ordered eighty thousand men to march to the protection of Otchakof. Another formidable army advanced to the shores of the Danube; and the Grand Vizier himself prepared to take command of the Ottoman forces. A large fleet of twenty ships of the line was ordered to sail for the Euxine Sea. At St. Petersburg, the declaration of war was received with transports of joy. The Empress had long since made every preparation. Various detachments of her armies were immediately on the march toward the seat of the war. The surface of the whole country swarmed with troops. Prince Potempkin was appointed generalissimo of all the Russian forces. Under his orders were Suwarrof and other celebrated generals. Marshal Romantzof, unwilling to act as the subaltern of Potempkin, or in any way to enhance his glory and his arrogance, excused himself on the score of his great age and infirmities. Two strong squadrons, under the command of Admirals Kruse and Grieg, were in readiness at Cronstadt to weigh anchor and sail for the Mediterranean. Eighty thousand Austrians, being the immense contingent

furnished by her ally Joseph II., were on their march toward the Turkish frontier.

Prince Potempkin, in person, commanded the entire Russian armament, which being divided into four detachments, advanced by different routes upon the enemy. But while the attention of Catherine, and even of Europe, was anxiously directed toward the impending conflict upon the Russian frontier, another enemy attacked her in a different quarter, and that quite unexpectedly. This new and sudden opponent was Gustavus, the King of Sweden, between whom and Catherine there had been an increasing coldness and jealousy for some time past. Gustavus, having ordered the squadron at Carlscrona to land the heavy artillery which was on board, proceeded at once to assault Fredericksham. The active mind of Catherine immediately made such preparation to meet this unexpected emergency as she was capable of. All her vast military resources being now marshalled on the distant confines of Turkey, she was surrounded with difficulty in making the necessary dispositions. She however ordered all the troops which were dispersed among the less distant garrisons, to march into Finland, and join the detachments which were already there.

The Grand Duke had earnestly solicited permission of his mother, to join the expedition against the Turks. Catherine, suspecting that this purpose might conceal some dangerous

design, dexterously found means to elude it. She desired him to delay his journey till after the confinement of his wife, the Grand Duchess. But he was not to be easily prevented from fulfilling his purpose. He represented to her, that all Europe had heard of his intention to attack the Ottomans. What would they say when they knew that he had failed in his purpose? The answer of Catherine was that of the mother and the Queen. Europe will say, said she, that the Grand Duke of Russia is a dutiful son! She however granted him leave to join the army in Finland against the Swedish monarch. But even there, she gave him no military commission. The heir of the empire found himself surrounded by the army, destitute of all authority, watched by spies, and being a mere titled nullity. He soon returned to St. Petersburg, where his vexation brought on an attack of sickness.

The Swedish fleet advanced boldly to within sight of the batteries of Cronstadt. It consisted of sixteen sail of the line. The rest of the Russian line of battle ships were about to sail for the Mediterranean, but they received orders to meet the Swedish squadron. Meanwhile several bloody and desperate engagements had taken place between the Turkish and Russian forces at the opposite extremity of the empire. The first of these was a general engagement, which occurred off the Island of Hohgland. So fierce were the respective combatants, and so many ships were disabled on both sides, that each

party was compelled to desist for a time, and prepare for a renewal. At eight o'clock P. M., the battle was commenced with increased fury. Nothing could exceed the violence of the action. The fierceness and obstinacy displayed on both sides, exceeded anything known in the bloody annals of war. The darkness of the night rendered the confusion greater. The surrounding gloom shut up each ship, as it were, from the rest of the fleet, and confined its knowledge of the fortunes of the action to its own sphere. The crew of each vessel fought as if the fate of the battle depended upon themselves alone. The battle at length ceased from the absolute exhaustion of both sides. Each claimed the victory, as each had captured a flag-ship. Immediately after this engagement, Admiral Greig, who commanded the Russian fleet, sailed for the Gulf of Finland, where, coming upon the Swedish fleet in the road of Sweaborg, he attacked them with indescribable fury, took and destroyed the "Gustavus Adolphus," a ship of sixty guns, and unfitted the rest for further action. The fleet of Catherine, triumphant on two seas, the Caspian and the Euxine, now rode the victorious mistress of the waves; and added new lustre to the diadem of the invincible Empress. The Swedish monarch afterward attacked Fredericksham by land. He was there defeated by the treachery of his own troops; but the war was at length closed by the intervention of England and Prussia, and peace once more established between the courts of Stockholm and St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SIEGE AND CAPTURE OF OTCHAKOF.—SUWARROF AND REPNIN.—THE RUSSIANS TAKE TUTUKAY.—ISMAÏL.—PRESENTS OF CATHERINE TO HER VICTORIOUS GENERALS.—DISMISSAL OF MOMONOF.—ZUBOF BECOMES FAVOURITE.—HIS FAMILY.—SINGULAR DEATH OF POTEMPKIN.

THE Russian land forces, assembled on the confines of Turkey, under the supreme command of Potempkin, had as yet done nothing worthy of themselves, and of the expectations entertained respecting them. The siege of Otchakof, an important Turkish city and fortress, had been begun. Potempkin's ambition was now thoroughly aroused, and he determined to make a decisive movement. The fortifications were immense. The garrison was numerous and well provisioned. The situation of the place and its natural advantages, all conspired to render it impregnable. The besiegers suffered intensely from the cold and from the want of provisions. Numbers of them perished from these causes every day.

Potempkin reconnoitred the place in the most fearless manner. He had been charged with cowardice, and he determined to refute the allegation. For several days previous to the grand assault on which he had resolved, he rode frequently

to and fro, with the utmost coolness, under the very cannon of the ramparts. On one of these occasions, an officer at his side had his thigh carried away by a cannon ball. A cry of suffering escaped him, at which Potempkin exclaimed: What do you cry for? The next day the officer expired.

During the assault however, which took place the next day, Potempkin remained in the camp, with his mistresses, his lieutenants, and his parasites. The attack was general. The whole Russian army of one hundred thousand men, moved forward to the assault simultaneously. The Turkish garrison made a vigorous and desperate defence. The conflict was long and bloody, both on the ramparts and in the streets; nor did the besieged yield, until nearly the whole garrison was put to the sword, and many thousands of the inhabitants had met with the same sad fate. Prince Anhalt-Bernburg, a relation of the Empress, who held an important command under Potempkin, was the first to enter the city, and greatly distinguished himself during the assault.

After the capture of Otchakof, the place was given up to rapine and plunder. Twenty-five thousand captives were taken. The Russian soldiers entered the houses, and after putting the men to death, abandoned themselves to all the excesses of debauchery and violence, from which neither sex nor age was exempt, and then carried away whatever valuables they could secure. These scenes of riot and lust lasted three

days, during which it is said, twenty thousand Turks were slain in cold blood. The capture of Otchakof took place on the festival of St. Nicholas, the national patron of Russia; so that the superstition of the soldiery attributed their success to the auspices of the saint. Four thousand women, of remarkable beauty, were included among the prisoners who graced the bloody triumph of the conquerors. During the assault the Russians lost twelve thousand men.

Catherine received the news of the fall of Otchakof with pleasure. She was fully conscious of the important events which hung upon that triumph. She rewarded her successfu and faithful servants, with more than her usual magnificence. To the Commander-in-chief Prince Potempkin, she sent one hundred thousand rubles, a Marshal's truncheon, a letter of thanks, and a medal struck to immortalize his glory. To her intrepid Generals Suwarrof* and Repnin, she gave magnificent

* Suwarrof somewhat resembled, both in the superiority of his genius, and his abruptness of manner, the peculiarities of Napoleon. On one occasion, in an interview with M. De Lameth, a French traveller, he addressed him as follows: "To what country do you belong? said the General, rudely.—France. What profession?—Military.—What rank?—Colonel.—Your name? De Lameth.—Good." M. De Lameth, annoyed at this manner of interrogation, said to Suwarrof: "To what country do *you* belong?—Russia.—What profession?—Military.—What rank?—General.—What name?—Suwarrof.—Good." Both immediately fell to laughing, and were thenceforward good friends. *Segur's Memoires, I.* 57.

swords, richly set with diamonds, and gorgeous plumes of brilliants, to be worn at the head of the army. To other inferior commanders she gave estates, slaves, and money. To the widow of a colonel of artillery who was slain in the attack, she gave an annuity; and promotions took place from the ranks in immense numbers.

The victorious troops now proceeded to other triumphs. Prince Potempkin took the Isle of Beresan. Repnin drove the Turks from the borders of the Solska. Suwarrof beat them at Fokshani. This was followed by the capture of Tutukay, in Bulgaria; and Bender surrendered at discretion. Near Martineski, thirty thousand Russians under the command of Suwarrof and the Prince of Coburg, were attacked by one hundred thousand Turks, when the latter were vanquished with terrible slaughter, and an incredible number of them slain. Nothing but the blunted swords and wearied horses of the pursuers, prevented still greater havoc among the fugitives. The whole Turkish camp as it stood, including the Grand Vizier's tents and equipage, three hundred camels, four hundred oxen, five thousand loaded wagons, eight thousand tents, twenty pieces of heavy cannon, sixty-four field-pieces, one hundred standards, and a prodigious quantity of ammunition and stores, were among the trophies of the victors. The last of the Russian conquests, previous to the proclamation of peace, was that of the fortress of Ismaïl. The siege of this place

had continued some months. Potempkin sent orders to Suwarrof that it must be taken within three days. The first and second assaults were unsuccessful. At the third and most desperate attack, the ramparts were forced, and the town taken, but not till after the slaughter of fifteen thousand Russians, who purchased with rivers of blood, the triumph of the haughty Potempkin. After the capture, Suwarrof, who commanded under Potempkin, wrote to the Empress this laconic epistle: "The proud Ismaïl is at your feet!" The Turkish general, Hassan, who had been raised to the dignity of Grand Vizier, in order to command the troops of the Sultan against the Russians, broken down by so many disasters, died of vexation in his camp.

Catherine was sufficiently elated at the news of these extraordinary successes. Potempkin left the army, in the camp upon the shores of the Caspian sea, and hastened to St. Petersburg, to enjoy the triumphs which there awaited him. The Empress received him with transports of joy. She again lavished upon him immense presents. A splendid palace, contiguous to her own, which had been repaired at the expense of six hundred thousand rubles, she presented him; together with a coat laced with diamonds, which cost two hundred thousand rubles. He displayed a pomp which would have been excessive in the most splendid court of Europe. He purchased cherries in the middle of winter at a ruble a-piece. He one

day took a dislike to his diamonds, and they were all sold. Soon after he desired again to possess them, and he ordered them to be purchased anywhere, at any price. Yet amid all his lavish expenditure, he possessed the vulgar weakness of not paying his debts, which he seemed to regard as a function beneath his dignity. During his stay of five months at St. Petersburg, he spent upward of a million of rubles. He expended incalculable sums in the splendid entertainments which he gave the Empress. His illuminated palaces and gardens, the gold, silver, and diamonds, the magic theatres, and artificial elephants, glittering with rubies and emeralds, and all the other inventions of his most lavish prodigality, it were vain to attempt to describe. They rivalled, if not exceeded the wonders of the Arabian Nights Entertainments. Even the imperial Catherine expressed her astonishment at the indescribable magnificence displayed by her noble subject, in his efforts to entertain and amuse his sovereign.

After a residence of five months at the capital, Potempkin returned to the army. Though satiated with pomp and grandeur, with every triumph and pleasure, which millions could purchase, he was still restless and wretched, exhibiting by the frequent sighs which he uttered, the gloom and sadness which pervaded his soul. His singular end was not very far distant. But before we approach the closing scenes of this most remarkable man's life, it will be proper to notice a change

which had occurred in the domestic arrangements and pleasures of the sovereign.

Her favourite Momonof had enjoyed her real affection, but he made her no adequate returns of regard or faithfulness Catherine was now old, and had lost the charms, but not the passions, of her youth. Momonof regarded his connexion with her as a brilliant and gilded slavery, and his heart had been won by a beautiful lady who served among the Empress's maids of honour. She was a daughter of Prince Scherbatof, was quite handsome, sprightly, and withal, very much disposed to the pleasures of gallantry. One day Momonof, who as yet had enjoyed no intimacy with her, heard Potempkin speak in praise of her charms. He was thunderstruck. He knew that Potempkin's power was such, that he had only to desire, in order to possess; Momonof immediately ran and threw himself on his knees to the Princess Scherbatof, and imparted to her the cause of his fears. The Princess immediately promised the favourite, the possession of all that he desired; and his apprehensions were soon dispelled, by the faithfulness with which she fulfilled her engagement.

This intimacy subsisted for so long a time that it became known to all the court. Catherine alone was ignorant of the infidelity of her favourite. At length one of her courtiers communicated to her the fact, accompanied with the proof She was much offended at the discovery, but resolved to con

ceal her chagrin. She proposed to Momonof to marry the Countess Bruce, one of the richest heiresses of her empire, who had just been presented at court. Momonof implored her not to insist upon it, and revealed to his mistress the fact, that he was inseparably attached to the Princess Scherbatof. She wanted no further excuse. The lovers were married the next day, and immediately set off for Moscow.

Though bound by every principle of gratitude and honour to respect the Empress, his late benefactress, Momonof was guilty of the baseness and the imprudence of mentioning to his wife, the particulars of his interviews with the Empress. She afterward divulged them with a levity injurious to the dignity of the sovereign. They were soon punished by the latter with a severity, commensurate with the degree of their baseness. One night when Momonof and his wife had retired to rest, the Chief of the Police at Moscow entered their apartment, and having shown them the order of the Empress in her own handwriting, which they immediately recognised, he left them in the hands of six women, and retired to an adjoining apartment. Then the six women, or rather the six men dressed as women, seized the babbling lady, and having stripped her entirely of her clothes, inflicted upon her a severe flogging; while her terrified husband was compelled to kneel down during the disagreeable operation. After the chastisement had been inflicted, the Chief of Police entered and said:

"This is the way the Empress punishes a first indiscretion; for the second people are sent to Siberia."

The very day of Momonof's dismissal, the office of favourite was conferred upon Plato Zubof, an officer in the horse guards. This was the last person who was elevated to that anomalous and equivocal dignity by the imperial Catherine. Her choice in this instance was not agreeable to Potempkin. But from the day of his elevation, Zubof had rendered himself so acceptable to his mistress, that even Potempkin's influence could not dislodge him. Fortunately for the favourite, the all-powerful minister shortly after departed to the camp upon the shores of the Caspian, and he was thus left undisturbed in the enjoyment of his good fortune, which continued until the death of the Empress cut short for ever both her pleasures, and his dignity.

After his arrival at the Russian camp, Prince Potempkin accomplished nothing worthy of his genius and fame. He did not even live to conclude the treaty which took place between the Turkish and Russian empires. An epidemical fever attacked him, while attending the congress at Yassy. He nevertheless continued his strange life of the most unbounded gluttony and debauchery. He was surrounded by a numerous and sumptuous retinue of women and courtiers. His conduct was of the most singular and extravagant description. He was known sometimes for a month, to pass whole

days in the apartments of a young female, neglecting alike all business, and all decorum. Sometimes for a week he would remain shut up in his room with his women, and his male intimates, lounging on a sofa, without speaking, playing at chess or at cards, with his legs bare, his shirt collar unbuttoned, in a loose morning-gown, apparently in a state of abstraction, and presenting the appearance of one deranged.*

But the strange career of this extraordinary being was about to close, in a manner, and under circumstances equally remarkable. Potempkin's disease, aggravated by his absurd diet, and his excessive indulgences, became at length so serious as to excite his own apprehensions. He imagined that by removing from Yassy, he would recover. He therefore resolved to set out for Nicolayef, a town which he himself had built at the confluence of the Inqul with the Boque. Scarcely had he progressed three leagues upon his journey, when he suddenly found himself much worse. He alighted from his carriage in the middle of the public road. He threw himself on the grass, beneath a tree, and there he expired in intense suffering, in the arms of the Countess Branicka, his favourite mistress. He for whose grasping ambition, a hundred palaces had scarcely been sufficient, died at length upon the bare bosom of the earth,

* *Vide Memoirs of Le Compte de Ségur*, formerly French ambassador at the court of St. Petersburg, and not less distinguished for his literary, than his political talents Vol. II. p. 221.

with no shelter above him but the vast canopy of heaven. He around whom multitudes of obsequious courtiers and dependants had bowed with reverence, and had waited on his every whim, bade the world an unwilling adieu, alone in the desert, with but very few attendants to minister to his last wants, and close his dying eyes. He expired on the 15th of October, 1791, at the age of fifty-two. His remains were transported to Kherson, where the Empress allotted a hundred thousand rubles to erect a splendid mausoleum over them.

Immediately after his death, a report was circulated that he had died of poison. His body on being brought to Yassy, was therefore opened; but not the least trace of poison could be discovered to justify the suspicion. His name will for ever hold a conspicuous place in the annals of Russian grandeur and conquest. He was a man of extraordinary, though eccentric abilities. In him Catherine lost her ablest statesman and general, as well as the firmest and proudest supporter of her throne. Four years afterward, she herself, under circumstances not less singular and remarkable, followed her early lover, and mighty minister, to the unbroken silence of the grave.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EMPRESS PROPOSES TO PURCHASE VOLTAIRE'S LIBRARY.—SHE OBTAINS IT.—SHE SENDS AN EXPLORING EXPEDITION TO THE NORTHERN ARCHIPELAGO.—ANOTHER TO THE CAUCASUS.—ANOTHER TO JAPAN.—AND ANOTHER TO CHINA.—HER TRANSACTIONS WITH THE TURKS.—POTEMPKIN AGAIN.—HIS ECCENTRICITIES.—HIS MENTAL QUALITIES.—HIS VAST WEALTH.—HIS ABSOLUTE INFLUENCE OVER CATHERINE. —HIS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE.—ADAPTED TO GOVERN NO OTHER COUNTRY BUT RUSSIA.

CATHERINE II., though the sovereign of a nation comparatively young in the achievements of science, allowed no opportunity to pass by, in which she could display her approval of men of letters, and her disposition to patronize genius, in every department of its labours. She even travelled beyond the confines of her own dominions, in order to display the spirit of a munificent patroness of science.

We have already stated, that on the death of Diderot, and of D'Alembert, the Empress purchased their libraries. The celebrated professor Pallas, during his travels in the interior of Russia, collected a vast quantity of natural curiosities, and thus accumulated a cabinet of rare value and interest. Catherine appropriated it to herself, by the payment of a large sum;

as she did everything else which served to illustrate the resources of her empire, or to impart information as to its character and possessions.

On the death of Voltaire, as we have already said, she commissioned M. Grimm, her literary agent at Paris, to endeavour to secure for her the library of the author of "Mahomet." Madame Denis, who had inherited this library, having informed him that she would not sell it; but would be happy to present it, as a testimony of her homage, to so great a Princess, and so gifted a woman, the Empress wrote to her as follows. "I have just learned, Madam, that you consent to make a surrender to me, of that precious deposit, left you by your late uncle; that library which souls of sensibility will never behold without recollecting, that this great man had the art of inspiring mankind with that universal benevolence, which all his writings breathe, even those of mere entertainment, because his soul was deeply penetrated with it. No man before him ever wrote like him: to future generations he will be both an example and a rock. To equal him, genius and philosophy must unite in one person with literature and entertainment. In one word, he must be M. de Voltaire. If Madame, with all Europe, I have shared in your grief, for the loss of that incomparable man, you have entitled yourself to participate in the grateful returns I owe to his writings. I am indeed extremely sensible to the esteem and confidence

which you show me. It is highly flattering to me, to see that they are hereditary in your family. The generosity of your conduct, is your security for my favourable sentiments in regard to you. I have written to M. de Grimm to deliver to you some inconsiderable testimonies of it, which I desire you to accept." On the cover of this letter, the Empress wrote, with her own hands as follows: "For Madame Denis, niece of a great man, who loved me much." She also requested of Madame Denis to send her a plan in relief, of the interior distribution of the Chateau de Ferney, as well as of the gardens and its avenues, as she proposed to erect a building like it, adjacent to her palace at St. Petersburg.

Catherine employed learned men expressly to travel throughout her dominions, to make researches as to the condition of the country and people, in order to aid her in the work of legislating for their interests. In 1786, she sent several of these expeditions to the northern Archipelago, and to the remotest provinces of the Russian empire. Some even were despatched to the Caucasus and the confines of China. The difficulties to which such an expedition by land was liable, from the severity of the climate, the hostility of the inhabitants, and the trackless regions to be explored, rendered the attempt almost as dangerous as a circumnavigation of the globe, or the most distant voyage of discovery. It was therefore necessary to secure the services of the most intrepid men.

The Baron de Stedtz, who had commanded a regiment of cavalry in the Empress's service, was the person whom she selected to conduct the expedition to the Caucasus, upon which she had determined. His corps consisted of eight hundred chosen men, who were led on by one hundred officers of various grades and distinctions, accompanied by pioneers, artillery men, engineers, historiographers and naturalists. They were abundantly provided with all kinds of necessaries, and were furnished with credentials suited to all situations. Three years were allowed for the performance of the expedition.

The results which were attained by it were various and valuable. They ascertained that there was a colony of strangers and Christians shut out from the world, in the remotest part of the Caucasian Mountains. These people were said to lead lives of the most exemplary piety, and to retain manners of primitive simplicity. They were entirely ignorant of their origin. They considered themselves as strangers, and were regarded as such by the surrounding nations. From the resemblance of language and other affinities, it was supposed that they were a colony of Bohemians, who at a remote period, had fled from the persecutions of their own country, and had sought refuge amid the mountain solitudes of the Caucasus. Not satisfied with these discoveries, Catherine sent another expedition by sea, to add to the information already received. She appointed Colonel Blaumayer to conduct it; who was

ordered to take along with him, able navigators, persons skilled in various arts, to make the proper investigations, and to turn to the greatest advantage, the discoveries which might be made. They were directed to embark at the mouth of the river Anadyr, and to examine carefully the several inhabited islands which lie about the sixty-fourth degree of latitude, and are in situations favourable to trade. They were ordered to enter the straits which separate Siberia from America; to pursue their course at least as far as the seventy-fourth degree of latitude; and if the seas were navigable, as much farther as possible. This expedition presents to view a singular, and perhaps an unparalleled circumstance in history: that of a great sovereign, appointing an expedition for the purpose of discovering new countries within her own dominions, and of ascertaining how far her authority was already extended!

In 1787, Catherine commissioned Captain Billings, who had been the associate of Cook in his celebrated voyages around the world, to explore the coasts of *Japan*. The principal object of this expedition was to obtain a port for the commerce of her subjects with that remote and jealous nation. They selected a place not far from the mouth of the river Amoor, as suitable for that purpose. In 1788, Catherine sent an army from the Baltic to Kamschatka, to co-operate with the forces sent to Japan, to take possession of the banks of the river Amoor, and establish a fort to protect her commerce

Among the fruits of this expedition was the capture of a woman, whom the inhabitants of Japan were represented as having carried off from America, and who related, that she came from a part of the continent very remote from that coast. She appeared to be the representative of a race then unknown to the rest of the civilized world.

From the remote northern region which had engaged the attention of Catherine, she now turned her thoughts to the opposite extremity of her dominions, and published a manifesto, for the purpose of increasing the inhabitants of her provinces of Tauris and the Caucasus. In that manifesto, the specious monarch uses the following language: "The protection which we uniformly grant to strangers who come into our empire, either to carry on commerce, or to exercise their industry, is well known. Every one may enjoy in our dominions, the exercise of the religion of his fathers, a perfect security, and the protection of the laws. All the necessaries and comforts of life, as well as the means of acquiring riches, offer themselves in the territory of the Caucasus; which is subject to our authority, and affords these advantages in greater abundance than any other provinces of our empire. Foreigners who are willing to settle there, whether in the towns or in the country, will be sure to find a peaceful asylum, with many advantages. They shall be, during six years, exempt from all duties to the crown; and if, at the expiration

of that term, they may desire to leave our dominions, they shall be at full liberty to go, on paying only the taxes for three years." The two seaports of Feodosia and Eupatoria in Tauris, were declared free ports for the term of thirty years, and leave was granted to all Russian as well as all foreign merchants, not only to import all sorts of goods and merchandise into those ports free of duty, but also to export them thence, in the same manner. By another decree proclaimed shortly afterward, she abolished the title of "*slaves*" throughout all her dominions in Russia and Tartary, and substituted that of "*subjects.*" By these means Catherine won the affection of those she governed. She took other means to gain this end; even condescending to caress their children, on all occasions when they came into her presence; frequently allowing them access to her apartments; returning their caresses with extreme complaisance; and causing her grandchildren to play with them in their familiar sports.

The attention of the Empress was now attracted to her ancient and formidable rivals, the Turks. In 1790, Selim III. ascended the Ottoman throne. This prince was then twenty-eight years of age. He had been reared and educated by his uncle, Achmet IV., his predecessor, with the greatest care; and the best principles becoming a prince had been taught him. His uncle had set aside his own legitimate issue from the succession, in consequence of a promise made by

him to his brother, whom he had himself succeeded, solemnized by him on his deathbed. Great hopes were entertained of Selim, that he would restore the ancient splendour and power of the Ottoman empire, while the fierceness and energy of his character seemed to presage the truth of the supposition. But he soon showed himself unworthy of the good faith which his uncle had kept toward him, as well as of the distinguished post which he occupied. He commenced his reign with acts of the greatest cruelty and rapacity. He stained his throne with blood and crime.

The first act of violence which he perpetrated, was the ruin of the Grand Vizier *Yussuf*. The wealth of this man was estimated at one million pounds sterling. As soon as he discovered that the rapacious eye of Selim was fixed upon him, he offered his wealth as the price of his liberty and life. But his blood was doomed to be the penalty of his opulence. He was seized at the head of the grand army, which he commanded at Ruschiuk; was conveyed a prisoner to Constantinople, and sentenced to banishment and the forfeiture of his treasures. But the tyrant thought that this punishment was too light for the crime of being a rich and great subject; and Yussuf was assassinated by the order of the Sultan before he reached the place of his exile. His head was then brought back in triumph, and hung up to adorn, or disgrace, the gates of the Seraglio. Confiscations and executions now became the

order of the day; and distance, poverty, and obscurity alone could protect the subjects of the Sultan from his destructive rapacity. He proceeded to trifle with the most cherished institutions of his empire. He overturned all the wise and judicious arrangements which had been made by his uncle; and not an officer whom that prince had appointed to any high trust, but was turned out by his successor. This was the monarch with whom Catherine had now to deal in the south-eastern extremity of Europe.

Her commanding officer there, General Kamenskoï, had posted his troops in such a manner through the winter, that without forming a regular blockade, he had nevertheless greatly incommoded the garrison of Bender by cutting off their supplies. When summer approached, the difficulties of the garrison increased. It became indispensably necessary for the Turks to come to their relief. The prince of Anhalt-Bernburg, who had so distinguished himself at the capture of the fortress of Otchakof, now commanded a detachment of Kamenskoï's army, and had an opportunity of adding new laurels to those which he had already won. He fell in with eight thousand Turkish cavalry on the Dniester, who were then bringing relief to the garrison of Bender; and though his forces were inferior in number, he instantly attacked the Turks, routed their whole force, took a large number of

prisoners, among whom was their commander, together with their baggage and convoy.

The Grand Vizier now entered the province of Wallacia with an army of one hundred thousand men. The combined forces of Austria and Russia, under the Prince of Coburg, and Suwarrof, again attacked him with an army of thirty thousand men, near Martinesti, and gained a complete and signal victory. About five thousand Turks were killed upon the spot, and two thousand afterward in the pursuit. The whole camp of the Vizier, as it stood, with his tents and equipage, became the property of the victors. A few hundred killed and wounded constituted the whole loss of the latter. The Russians pursued their conquests to the Euxine, where the strong seaport of Akarman, at the mouth of the Dniester, fell into their hands. Kylia Nova, another fortress on the northern bank of the Danube, which was a conquest of importance to the commerce of Russia, also became the prey of the victorious legions of the Empress, and served to swell the splendor of her triumph. Elated at these and other successes which attended her arms, she said ironically to Sir Charles Whitworth, the English Ambassador, when he next appeared at Court: "Sir, since the King, your master, seems determined to drive me out of St. Petersburg, I hope he will allow me to retire to Constantinople."

Potempkin during this campaign employed the services of

several French officers, emigrants, and fugitives from the horrors of the Revolution, which at that time ravaged their native land. Among these were Roger Damas, Langeron, and the younger Richelieu, each of whom distinguished himself at the capture of Ismaïl. Some days after that event, Potempkin was discoursing of the Revolution to the French officers, and treating it as a crime for a nation to put forth any exertion to regain their liberty. He said to Langeron: "Colonel, your countrymen are a pack of hounds and madmen. If my grooms would stand by me, I should soon bring them to their senses." Though Langeron was an emigrant from his native country, yet he would not hear it thus traduced, and he answered: "Prince, I do not think you would be able to do it, with your whole army." Potempkin was much enraged, and threatened to send Langeron to Siberia, there to meditate at his leisure on the power of Russian tyranny. Langeron instantly left the army, crossed the Seret, which divides Moldavia from Wallacia, and entered the Austrian camp. Thus love of country, though even of a country so debased and degraded as was France, when under the destructive sway of popular demagogues, will follow exiles to the most distant quarters of the globe.

The most remarkable person, after Catherine herself, in her whole empire, was the Prince whom we have just named —*Potempkin*. We have had frequent occasion already to

allude to his character, his magnificence, and his eccentricities. He required major-generals to wait humbly on his person, and fulfil the duties of *valets-de-chambre;* nor did this servility of conduct on their part hinder their promotion in the service, but it rather advanced it. A lady, well known at St. Petersburg, whose husband held an office at court, declared publicly, that she would travel with Potempkin, who had already presented her an estate of two thousand rubles a year, to go and pass the summer with him at Yaffy.

He was anxious to procure the most rare and costly articles, which, as soon as possessed, he forgot, and never again looked at. He purchased a dozen violins at the most extravagant prices; one of which alone cost him six thousand rubles. Yet he never played on the violin in his life, and his valuable instruments were soon ruined by the dust, or destroyed by the rats. Some one boasting of his library, Potempkin declared that he had one more valuable than any owned by the learned men of Europe. He opened a book-case and there exhibited several shelves of books, which, on being taken down, were found to be nothing else than boxes gilt, and lettered on the backs, filled with bank-notes, and rouleaus of ducats, of an incredible value. He was very whimsical, notwithstanding his vast wealth, and his magnificent mode of life, respecting the payment of his debts. When any one waited on him to obtain money, he would say carelessly to Popof, his private

secretary: "*Why* don't you pay that man?" at the same time giving him to understand by his manner how he intended the applicant to be treated. If he opened his hand, Popof paid the money. If he shut it, the creditor got nothing. He was harsh with his officers, but was condescending and affable to the soldiers. It was supposed that this conduct was agreed upon between the Empress and the Prince, in order to put discord between the officers and soldiers; each of them being aware, that as all revolutions are effected in Russia by the soldiers, it was much more important to win the good-will of the latter.

The most wonderful projects, for his future aggrandisement, have been ascribed to him. It is asserted that he had determined, at the death of the Empress, to exclude the Grand Duke Paul from the succession, and by means of the influence of the troops to place the eldest Grand Duchess on the throne, marry her, and thus seat himself by her side, as sovereign of all the Russias. It is added, in support of this conjecture, that he always pretended to defend whatever the Grand Duchess asserted; and that he constantly and carefully courted her good-will. Others assert, that he had determined to be proclaimed hospodar or sovereign of Moldavia. He had gained the kind feeling of the nobility of that country. He had caressed them all, from the greatest to the least. And it is probable that Catherine would have assisted his pretensions;

inasmuch as by so doing, she would have brought that country under her own dominion as she had already done that of the Crimea. But his ambitious projects, of this description, he never realized.

From his great sagacity and penetration, Catherine admitted him into the secret of all her plans and purposes. She valued him the more, because he kept the Grand Duke in awe, of whose ambitious purposes she sometimes entertained unpleasant apprehensions. Potempkin died at a time when Catherine was far advanced in years, and when she reposed confidence in no one else but in him. It was at a time also when it was too late for her to train up another man to perform the important services which he had long rendered her, and which were indispensable to the prosperity and stability of her empire. Potempkin's particular department was that of the army which in Russia was the most important branch of the government. Potempkin frequently neglected its interests, and a want of provisions and forage was a frequent occurrence. But he was a favourite with the soldiers, who looked with a lenient eye on his occasional neglect of their necessities, and ascribed it to the eccentricity of his character. Great carelessness characterized him in some respects. Thus in his private affairs the same weakness appears. His palace at St. Petersburg exhibited the greatest confusion. It was a frequent thing for the visiter to pass through a suite of apartments without finding a single

servant to take his card. Sometimes not a piece of bread was to be found in it; but there was always an abundance of *petit-patés* and champagne.

Potempkin possessed a thorough knowledge of his country, and of its inhabitants. He therefore would treat Russian officers very differently from the manner which he observed toward the soldiers and officers of other nations. The latter he kept seated beside him. The former he required to stand; and never allowed them to pass within the sill of his door, but required them to await, or to address him from without. He had never travelled in foreign countries, and yet he knew what treatment was best adapted to secure the respect of natives of all the countries of Europe. It was remarkable in his history, that having ceased to be the favourite of Catherine in a more tender relation, instead of falling into disgrace, or at least into neglect, as was the fate of all her other favourites who ceased to please her capricious taste, he still retained unbounded influence over her, by the pure force of his superior genius. He retained his absolute power also, without ever allowing any of the Empress's subsequent favourites, some of whom she devotedly loved, to weaken his supremacy in state affairs; and this circumstance is as creditable to Catherine as it is to Potempkin. It shows that she was able to make her violent passions subservient and obedient to the dictates of her reason; inasmuch as none of her favourites were allowed to con-

trol, or interfere with, the measures of a man, whom she knew to be so useful, and even necessary, to her administration.

Amid his official duties, Potempkin amused himself, at intervals, in having Plutarch read to him. When he came to the life of Agesilaus, and the description of his conquests, he interrupted the reader, and after being buried in thought for a few moments, asked him: "Think you that I could go at some future period to Constantinople?" The reader replied, "If the sovereign pleases, there is nothing to prevent your doing so." "That is enough," returned the Prince, "if any one was to inform me to-day that I should never see Constantinople, I should shoot myself through the head." His grasping ambition had even induced him to meditate the conquest of China; and preparations were actually made for taking possession of the Amoor at Nertschinck, where the Russians have their gold and silver mines. His premature death put an end to all his ambitious schemes for the subjugation of China and of Turkey. His impression was that ten thousand Russians could conquer China; so contemptuous an opinion did he entertain for the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire. He possessed a large degree of political and diplomatical dexterity. He was much incensed at the details of the French Revolution. He was several times overheard talking to himself on that subject, accompanying his meditations with violent gesticulations.

Nature had gifted this remarkable man with a gigantic stature, and with a degree of bodily strength, such as made him resemble Hercules and Theseus of former ages. The same peculiarity also belonged to Gregory Orlof, another favorite of the amative Empress. When first beheld, Potempkin had something fierce in his appearance, which exhibited a singular mixture of rude and of cultivated nature. His look was animated and piercing. His countenance was expressive and lofty; such as became the head of a Richelieu or a Mazarin; yet placed on the robust shoulders of a savage. He was prone to silence, and eager to listen. His usual maxim was to let people talk, and they will expose themselves, and give him all the advantage he desired. His silence was the silence of thought and reflection. He was, at once, indolent and indefatigable, turbulent and discreet. He paid but little attention to the opinions of a world which he despised. His impulses allowed of no restraint or limit. He made half a continent subservient to the indulgence of every passion, to the gratification of every whim. His mind was a singular compound of untutored genius, of grasping ambition, of insatiable avarice, of ungoverned lust, of all noble instincts, and of all beastly passions. He was a lion held by a single chain, and that chain was in the hand of the Empress.

Potempkin was ever promising and rarely keeping his word. He had conversed with men in all professions and

branches of knowledge and labour; had treasured up the information thus obtained; and though he never opened a book, yet he seemed to be well informed, and even learned, in all departments of knowledge. None knew better how to draw forth the information of others and appropriate it to himself. The inequality of his temper was productive of an amazing eccentricity in his desires and in his conduct. At one time he determined to become the Duke of Courland, in the place of Biren, the legitimate owner of that dignity. At another, he bethought him of deposing Augustus, King of Poland, and himself assuming the sceptre of which he would have despoiled him. Sometimes he declared that he would be made a bishop. Then again he would proclaim his intention of becoming a monk, and retiring from the world. He built himself a superb palace, and wished to sell it before it was finished. One day he would speak of nothing but war, and no one but officers and soldiers, Tartars and Cossacks, were admitted to his presence. The next day he had no ear for anything but the details of the administration of peace. Sometimes he would partition off, in his plans, the Ottoman Empire, and put in agitation all the courts of Europe. At other times, dressed in magnificent clothes, covered with orders presented him by every sovereign of Europe, glittering with diamonds of extraordinary value, he would give superb entertainments, without any object whatever. He began everything; he finished no-

thing. He disordered the finances; he disorganized the army. He depopulated his country; he enriched it at the same time. His conquests increased the territories of his mistress, while his weaknesses impaired her influence and supremacy throughout Europe. He was not a great man, but he was an extraordinary man. What is most remarkable about him is the fact, that his character and genius, such as they were, were admirably adapted to the wants of Catherine and of Russia at that particular time. With no other woman, and in no other country could he ever have attained any extraordinary influence and power.

We have presented these details concerning this minister, inasmuch as no correct idea can be formed of the reign and the empire of his mistress, without them. The administration of Catherine II. may justly be termed the reign of Catherine and Potempkin. To read the history of Catherine, without adding that of her great Minister, is almost like reading "the play of Hamlet, with the part of Hamlet left out!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DUCHY OF COURLAND.—HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY.—MORALS OF THE PEOPLE.—THEIR MODE OF GOVERNMENT.—CATHERINE DETERMINES TO ANNEX THE DUCHY TO HER DOMINIONS.—HER POLITICAL INTRIGUES.—SHE SUCCEEDS IN HER PURPOSE.—CATHERINE'S ATTENTION TO THE RELIGIOUS INTERESTS OF HER PEOPLE.—THE IMPROVEMENT OF HER CAPITAL.—INUNDATIONS OF ST. PETERSBURG.—HER PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES.—VARIOUS DETAILS OF HER ADMINISTRATION.

THROUGHOUT her reign, the condition of the Duchy of Courland excited a large share of Catherine's attention. This country, situated between the 56th and the 58th degrees of north latitude, is divided into three parts; into Courland proper, Semigallia, and the circle of Pilten. It is bounded by Livonia, Lithuania, and the Baltic. After the death of the sanguinary Biren, this country was governed by his feeble son, the Duke Peter. It is favorably situated for navigation, having three hundred leagues of coast on the Baltic Sea. The mouth of the river Vindau, which is never closed by the ice, is admirably suited as a station for a fleet. It might with ease be made capable of containing a hundred ships of the line, which could always keep the neighboring nations of

Denmark and Sweden in awe. The climate of the country is good, though cold. The inhabitants are robust, and live to a great age. The soil is generally fertile, producing an abundance of fruits, vegetables, grain, and valuable timber. The forests are abundant in game, and the rivers teem with fish. There are quarries of marble, and mines of iron, as well as of coal. The exports furnished by Courland, are wheat, barley, oats, timber, hemp, flax, furs, hides, and other commodities. The country, however, possessed no manufactures; so that not only all articles of luxury, but also many necessary and indispensable fabrics, came from abroad,—from Germany Denmark, and England.

In former ages there were kings in Courland; and a family still subsists among the peasantry, who even now retain some privileges, as being the descendants of those ancient monarchs. Mitau is its capital, built in 1270, by Conrad of Medem, Grand Master of the Knights of the Sword, whose family still exists. In 1737, on the extinction of the reigning race of Courish Princes, the Empress Anne of Russia compelled the inhabitants of the country to accept her worthless favourite, Biren, as their prince. Of his banishment and recall, we have elsewhere spoken.

The morals of the Courlanders were bad, and their laws tolerated their immoralities. The nobles were addicted to excessive debauchery, and enjoyed the most extraordinary

privileges. The inhabitants of the towns, and the peasantry, were much oppressed. The latter were very ignorant and superstitious; and were firm believers in the arts of sorcery. Some of them were even idolaters, and amid the remote solitudes of the forests, sacrificed animals to their gods. Education was much neglected. There was no institution of public instruction in all Courland, in Catherine's day, except the Academy at Mitau. The established religion was Lutheran; though all sects were tolerated. The rights and usages of the Courish nobles resembled those of the nobility of Poland. They had their diets, and their private tribunals of justice on their respective estates. In the administration of justice, they were absolute among their own peasantry, and often perpetrated acts of great violence and outrage in furtherance of the gratification of their passions of avarice, hatred, and lust.

The great excesses perpetrated by the Grand Duke Peter, on his unhappy subjects, created universal discontent, and induced the inhabitants of the Duchy, as a last resort, to invoke the interposition and protection of Catherine. Her emissaries had indeed for some time been actively at work in preparing the way for this event. She had thus gained over the principal nobility, and especially the Counsellor Hoven, an eloquent, ambitious, and intriguing man. The Courish nobles, the principal of whom were the families of Manteufel, Klopman, Korf, Igelstroem, Munster, and Medem, were often

invited to St. Petersburg, where the reception which they received from the Empress, the distinctions, honors, and presents which were lavished upon them, won their attachment, and induced them to prefer the pleasures of the capital to the tameness of Mitau; and induced them to continue under the dominion of a sovereign of so vast and splendid an empire, rather than to live under the control of a duke whom they despised and hated.

To further her ends, Catherine filled their minds with apprehensions, and threw divisions and dissensions among the nobility. She instigated the inhabitants of Livonia to insist on the performance of an ancient convention, by which the Courlanders were obliged to bring all their merchandise to Riga. This was a singular stipulation, inasmuch as the latter had excellent harbors of their own, and it caused them great expense to transport their articles of trade to Riga. But Catherine, when the quarrel became ripe, sent her engineers into Courland to construct a canal to transport their goods into Livonia, and the Courlanders, seeing the determination of the Empress, had recourse to the only means of avoiding the impending evil, by asking to be incorporated into her empire, and thus claim her protection from the encroachments of their neighbours. At this stage of the matter she sent for the Duke of Courland to come to St. Petersburg. But no sooner had he arrived there than the States of Courland held an assembly

The nobility proposed to place the country under the protection of Catherine. The Counsellor Hoven spoke long in favour of the supremacy of Russia. The dispute became warm on both sides. Challenges were passed, and swords drawn, when the Russian general Pahlen appeared in the assembly. No one afterward presumed to raise any further opposition, and Courland became incorporated into the empire of all the Russias. When the Duke of Courland returned, after a flattering reception at Petersburg, to Mitau, he first learned from his own subjects, the fact that they had deprived him of his dominions. The Empress immediately sent a governor thither to take his place. The property of the few Courlanders who were disaffected, and opposed to the supremacy of Catherine, was confiscated, and given to her courtiers, of which her favourite obtained the largest share. The Duke of Courland, though deprived of his dukedom, had fortunately purchased some estates, the jurisdiction of which consoled him for his losses. These were the small duchy of Sagan in Silesia, the domain of Rottenberg, and Fredericksfeldt in Brandenberg.

This extraordinary woman passed with ease from the grave intrigues of states and parliaments, and from the vicissitudes of her ambitious conquests, to the incidents of her court, the interests of literature, and the advancement of religion. On the great day of the "Benediction of the Waters" at St. Petersburg, Pamphilief, her confessor, by her orders invited

to his house the ecclesiastics of all communions, and gave them a grand entertainment called the Dinner of Toleration.

At these agreeable meetings, his eminence Gabriel, metropolitan Archbishop of Novgorod and St. Petersburg, always presided. Pamphilief did the honours of the table with that hospitality and suavity of manners for which the Russians are so famous among all who visit their country. When wines of various sorts were served round on a salver, the before-mentioned prelate once observed, with a sensible allusion to the occasion: "These wines are all good; they differ only in colour and taste."—The persons present at one of these dinners, as an example of the rest, were: Gabriel metropolitan; Innocentius, Archbishop of Pscove and Riga· Eugenius, Archbishop of Kherson, the famous translator of Virgil into Greek hexameter verse; Ivan Pamphilief, the Empress's confessor: all members of the holy synod. Other Russian clergy were: Innocentius, archimandrite, and rector of the gymnasium at the monastery of St. Alexander Nefsky; Antonius, archimandrite at the imperial corps of noble land-cadets; Basilius, protopope at the marine cadet corps; Andrew Samborsky, protopope of St. Sophia, formerly chaplain to the embassy at London; Neetarius, monk at the Greek gymnasium; Sergius, monk at the imperial academy of arts; Sergius Livitof, pope of the imperial chapel; Ivan, chaplain at the imperial seminary for young ladies; Matthew, chaplain at the

artillery and engineer cadet-corps; Basilius, chaplain at the imperial academy of sciences; Basilius, pope of the church of the annunciation; Stackæus, chaplain at the imperial noble land-cadet-corps; and Joseph, deacon at the same.

The effect produced by such an assemblage from year to year, in harmonizing the spirit of religious discord which existed among so many and such incongruous elements, was favourable; and presents a pleasing feature, in contemplating the vast and varied interests provided for, by the comprehensive mind of the Empress.

The improvement of her capital was not the least interesting and commendable feature of her reign. She took pride in showing to the world, that she was capable of improving upon the stupendous enterprises of Peter I., by which he turned a wet and sandy marsh into the most gorgeous and splendid capital of modern Europe. Situated at the mouth of a large navigable river, it is exposed to frequent inundations. When the westerly winds blow with violence for any long period of time, the waters of the Neva rise to the height of ten feet above its ordinary level. At five feet elevation, it overflows only the western portion of the city, but when it reaches ten feet, only the eastern extremity of the city escapes. In 1777, on Sunday, the tenth of September, the water rose to the height of ten feet, seven inches above the ordinary level; and though it retired again within its banks in two hours afterward, yet

this short inundation had produced singular results. A ship from Lubeck was carried into the wood of Vassili-Ostrof. The Duchess of Kingston, whose visit to the capital we have elsewhere described, had her yacht much damaged, by being cast upon the bar. Many wooden houses were carried away, and many persons lost their lives during the obscurity of the night.

The Empress immediately took measures to avoid the repetition of such a calamity. For several years the height of the water had been carefully marked at the castle. Afterward, whenever the river rose, its ascent was announced or indicated by signals, which thus apprised the inhabitants of the capital of their danger. Whenever it rose above its banks at the mouth of the Great Neva, three signal guns from the citadel informed them of the fact; these were repeated at intervals as the danger increased. The latter signal consisted of five guns from the admiralty battery, and on its steeple, four white flags were displayed, and by night, four lanterns were hung out. In places most exposed to the inundations, vessels were placed to rescue those who were in danger. These regulations, together with the increased buildings, the lofty and strong embankments, the magnificent stone quays of the Neva, and the extension of the surface of the water by the enlargement of the canals, rendered the danger from the western gales no longer terrible, as once they were, to the inhabitants of St. Petersburg.

Catherine also turned her attention to securing her capital from depredations by fire. St. Petersburg, when first built, contained many wooden houses. The danger from loss by fire was very great. The northern winds, which blew across the capital, rendered a fire particularly destructive in St. Petersburg. To lessen the danger, she established a fire police, to whom she paid regular wages. Over this establishment, which consisted of one thousand six hundred and twenty-two men, were placed ten fire-masters. In consequence of this liberal provision of the Empress for the protection of her capital, calamities by fire were of rare occurrence, and when they did happen, they were usually in the suburbs of the city, where the houses were of wood and very old. The people of the fire police became so dexterous, that sometimes wooden houses, contiguous to another one on fire, received no damage whatever. She forbade quick driving through the streets; though the peculiar construction of her capital made that usage less dangerous than elsewhere. The streets are very broad and capacious. They run in right angles and straight lines; and there is abundance of room for a large number of vehicles to pass each other. Yet, on occasions where a large number of equipages are collected together, the numerous soldiers or Cossacks on horseback keep order, so that accidents are rarely heard of. At the theatres, the court, the clubs, and especially at the entertainments given at the palace, and on the great

festivals, the multitudes of people who assemble, and pass through the streets are immense. On the bridges which cross the Neva, accidents rarely occur; and at the diversions of the ice-hills,—an amusement peculiar to Russia,—many lives would be lost, were it not for the judicious regulations, which were made by Catherine, to govern the national sports. As soon as the ice begins to be porous and unsafe, care is taken to break it near the shore, to prevent persons from venturing upon it; and notices are placed upon posts for that purpose. Sometimes the police will restrain the foolhardy adventurers among the populace, who for a wager would occasionally place their lives in danger.

The solicitude of her majesty for the welfare and security of her subjects even extended to those laws which were necessary for the prevention of contagious diseases; to the inspection of damaged goods and provisions; and to every other precaution, suggested by wisdom and experience, for the promotion of the happiness of her people.

We have thought it proper to enter even into these minute details, in reference to the administration of this distinguished woman, in order to present a faithful picture of her character, both as a woman and as a sovereign. Nothing is beneath the dignity of history, which serves to throw light upon the development of human character; or to illustrate the way in which minds of vast and comprehensive power display their

energies, when placed in circumstances propitious to their exercise and their development. Catherine was fortunately placed, partly by accident, and partly by the force of her own aspiring genius, in a situation so exalted, that whatever she did, even her most insignificant actions, secured the close attention and scrutiny of mankind. Russia owes almost as much to her powerful genius, as she does to that of Peter the Great. The latter evoked order and beauty from utter chaos The former added to the beautiful handiwork of its creator, a finish, a refinement, and a perfection of which his own rude and gigantic nature was incapable. Peter the Great took the rugged block of marble from the great quarry of Nations, with all its sharp unpolished points, with all its rough excrescences; and made a statue out of it, which displayed strong marks of creative genius, and produced a work of bold and striking effect. Catherine II. applied her graceful and skilful hand to this rude statue; added the final and finishing touches; removed every imperfection; heightened every beauty; and thus left nothing undone, which human genius could achieve, to enhance the power, wealth, and glory of her vast empire.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CATHERINE AS A DIPLOMATIST.—HER RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.—HER MEASURES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION.—SHE ESTABLISHES HER LOAN BANK.—"THE COURT OF CONSCIENCE."—HER IMPROVEMENTS IN RUSSIAN JURISPRUDENCE.—COM. PAUL JONES.—THE GREEK REVOLUTION.—FAILURE OF THEIR REVOLT.

WHOEVER carefully examines the events of Catherine's reign, will be struck with this marked peculiarity in her administration: that all her measures were *progressive;* that she ever had in view the increased aggrandizement of her throne and empire; and that neither the allurements of pleasure, nor the attractions of dissipation, were allowed to interfere with this great and honourable purpose.

This remark will be illustrated by the number of treaties which she established with surrounding and rival nations. It will appear from the fact, that wherever she did not gratify her ambition by the aggressions of conquest, she accomplished the same end by the nobler means of amity and negotiation. In 1785, she concluded a treaty with France, which greatly promoted the commercial interests of her subjects, as well as increased her military defences. In the same year, she con-

cluded a similar treaty with the Emperor of Germany; which obtained several peculiar privileges for her subjects. Among these was a clause granting them an exemption from all duties in the port of Riga. The duties on Hungarian wines were also reduced; as well as those on leather, hides, and other commodities. The terms of the treaty limited its duration to twelve years, and mutual friendship seemed established on a permanent basis between the two countries. Similar compacts were entered into by Catherine with several other European powers, whose commercial interests were identical with her own.

Another peculiarity of her reign deserves notice and commendation. This was the spirit of religious toleration which ever characterized and adorned her administration. This fact deserves particular attention. Catherine was the sovereign of a despotic empire. She was indeed the great representative of political despotism in Europe; her throne was the strongest bulwark of the absolute order of things, which had existed during preceding centuries. Novelties and changes might be introduced elsewhere: the very suggestion of an alteration in the fundamental principles of her government, and of all conservative governments in general, must needs be treason to her, and be utterly repugnant to her feelings and her measures.

Now, intolerance in regard to religion, has ever been a

characteristic of conservative governments. The throne and the altar have been for many ages, the sworn supporters of each other; and the blow which shatters the one, inevitably mars the beauty, and weakens the supremacy of the other Hence it is, that the sovereigns of Europe have usually been the opponents of change and progress in religion, as well as in politics. It has also been a first principle in their creed, that it appertains to their sovereignty, to prescribe even the form of religion to be cherished and observed by their subjects Accordingly, they patronize established religions; which always become their own supporters, and thus confer reciprocally the blessings which kings bestow on them back upon the authors of their prosperity and influence. The Greek religion was, accordingly, the established religion of Russia; and as such, was a part of the policy, a part of the institutions, and a part of the government of that empire.

Yet Catherine had formed the wise resolution, at the beginning of her reign, to allow the largest liberty to every form of religious belief which her subjects could desire, however repugnant their views might be to the principles or doctrines established by law. Not one instance occurred, from the day on which she ascended the throne, until the hour of her death, in which a human being was called upon to suffer, even in the smallest degree, much less in any serious measure, for his religious opinions. Not only did she extend this protection to

her own hereditary dominions, but also to those territories which she acquired by conquest; and in which a less generous and liberal toleration might have been expected. Among her subjects might be found, in addition to those who professed the Greek religion, Calvinists, Jews, Lutherans, Moravians, Catholics, Mahommedans, Heathens, and various other religious sects. The intolerant bigots of other climes, whose moral and intellectual pretensions were far higher and greater than those of the Russian autocratrix, might observe with advantage, the provinces of Livonia, Esthonia, and Finland, and there receive lessons of Christian charity and forbearance.

For this peculiarity of her administration, Catherine certainly deserves great credit. Freedom of speech and of thought in religion, inevitably leads to freedom of speech and of thought in politics. To grant the former, might be supposed to endanger the security and the permanency of her throne, in regard to the latter. For her conduct in this particular, Catherine assigned a reason which does honour at least to her sympathies, if not to her intellect. Speaking of heretics, or of those who were styled such, according to her religious belief, she once said: "Unhappy beings! Since we know they are to suffer so much, and so long, in the world to come, it is but reasonable that we should endeavour, by all means, to make their situation here, as comfortable as we can." Indeed, her generosity was much greater than that of her clergy; for

she was once compelled to exercise all the authority of her sceptre to screen M. Samborsky from the fury of the monks, because he appeared abroad without a beard, and in the ordinary dress of an English clergyman, on his return from a residence of several years in England.

The same agreeable feature is presented to our view, when we survey the efforts made by Catherine to promote education among her subjects. The ignorance and debasement of the Russian serfs were indeed hopeless and extreme. No power of a sovereign or of an autocrat, however absolute and supreme, could illumine minds which were so hopelessly degraded, or elevate and dignify characters which had, during long years of neglect, been stamped with inherent and radical abasement. But even in her administration of the interests of this peculiar and anomalous class of her subjects, we find much to commend. We discover there a prevailing spirit of generosity and of benevolence, for the countless multitudes of immortal beings, who, capable of an honourable and an exalted destiny, had been lowered by many generations of tyranny, to the level of the brute.

Catherine early entertained the purpose of establishing houses of education throughout her dominions, for the benefit of the middle and higher classes of her subjects. For this purpose she established a Commission of Public Instruction, with her former favourite, Zavadosky, at its head; who with-

out being reinstated in his former more delicate relation to the Empress, yet received a distinguished share of her notice; was appointed Secretary of the Cabinet, and President of the Lombard, or Loan Bank.

In addition to the welfare of religion and of literature, the Empress also extended her cares to promoting the financial interests of her subjects. She did this more particularly, by the establishment of the "*Loan Bank,*" which we have just named. This was a peculiar institution, and deserves a more particular mention than we have yet given it.

In general, monarchs are eager to borrow from their subjects. Catherine, peculiar and original in everything, reversed the usual order of things; and instead of borrowing money from her subjects, so arranged it, that her subjects borrowed money from her. She became the great money-lender of the empire. She established a bank on this principle, possessing a capital of thirty-three millions of rubles; and empowered to issue bills possessing the currency of money, to the amount of a hundred millions more. Of the fund thus invested, twenty-two millions of rubles were to be lent to the nobility, for twenty years, on mortgage on their estates, at an interest of five *per cent.* Their estates were not to be subject to confiscation; but heavy pecuniary penalties were to arise upon any neglect to pay the interest which accrued. At four successive periods, during the term of twenty years, the mortgagors might redeem

their estates, by paying both the principal and the interest which were due.

The remaining eleven millions of rubles of the principal of this Imperial Bank, were devoted to the encouragement, both of foreign and domestic commerce, and of the internal trade of the empire, by being loaned in smaller sums to merchants and retail dealers. The bank also operated as an Insurance Company from losses by fire. All foreigners as well as all Russians, were allowed to deposit their funds in this bank; and to have the sovereign's word and credit pledged for their security.

In the commission established by Catherine to conduct the normal schools, there were associated with Zavadosky, the learned Æpinus, who had been preceptor to Paul Petrovitch; a man distinguished alike by his learning and his virtues; and Pastukof, the private secretary of the Empress, and another of the preceptors of the Grand Duke. By the sagacious advice of Æpinus, the Austrian method of instruction was introduced into the normal schools, as being best adapted to the wants of the Russian people. To accomplish this purpose the better, Joseph II. sent Yankovitch to St. Petersburg, at Catherine's request, to aid in establishing her schools according to the Austrian system. But this aged bigot was incapable of entering into the enlarged views of Æpinus; and eventually

became a great obstacle in the way of accomplishing his judicious plans.

The Habeas Corpus Act has long been the pride of British legislation, and the cherished privilege of British subjects. Catherine deserves the high honour of having introduced into the Russian jurisprudence a proceeding which, in a similar degree, secured the liberty and promoted the happiness of her own subjects.

She established in every province of the empire, a peculiar tribunal, called the *Court of Conscience;* whose object was the preservation of personal security, the mitigation of the condition of unhappy criminals, and the equitable termination of all civil disputes. This court consisted of a Judge who presided, and of six associates, two of whom, every three years, were chosen from the class of burghers, and two from the class of boors. Each rank had jurisdiction only over the accuser and the accused belonging to its own order. The rule, or principle, which governed the decisions of this court, was a strict construction of the laws; and where these failed to reach the particular wants of any case, the exercise of a wise discretion was allowed the judges, that they might invoke the aid of equity, where the letter of the law was deficient or imperfect.

This court had no authority to interfere in any matter by its own motion. It could only take cognisance of cases which were brought under its notice by the direct petition or com-

plaint of the aggrieved subject; or by an order from the government; or by the direction of a higher and superior tribunal. The cases of all such criminals as had fallen into guilt by some unfortunate accident or influence; those whose punishment far outweighed their actual turpitude; all the crimes of youth and indiscretion; all cases of witchcraft and conjuration; all instances of punishment arising from stupidity, imposition, and persecution, belonged to this tribunal. In all cases of civil dispute or litigation, that court recommended their settlement without the expense of legal process, by a reference to arbitrators, chosen by the parties. If the arbitrators could not agree, the court ordered the accuser and the accused, the plaintiff and the defendant, to appear before them: it examined all the facts and merits of the case, and made its decision. If the parties refused to submit to that decision, they were referred, by the payment of costs, to the regular courts of law.

But the peculiar merit of this court was that prerogative, which rendered it the great protector of *personal liberty*. When any one sent in a petition to that court, declaring that he had been detained in prison upward of three days, and that, during this period, the cause of his detention, and the crime laid to his charge, had not been made known to him; or that during this time he has had no primary hearing whatever; then the Court of Conscience was bound to issue an

order, that he be immediately brought into court, and be shown the reasons why he had been imprisoned, and why he had received no hearing. If this process was not attended to within twenty-four hours, after the request of the defendant was made, the president of the court was subject to a fine of five hundred rubles, and each of the associates to a fine of one hundred. If the Court of Conscience discovered that the prisoner had not been arrested upon a charge of treason, murder, robbery, or theft, it issued an order to set him at liberty, on security being given, or bail entered, that he would appear to answer the charge made against him, in the proper and appropriate court. No one could presume to arrest him again in another court on the same charge, after being once released by the Court of Conscience. In this respect, there was no clashing of the jurisdiction of the Court of Conscience or Equity, and that of the Courts of Law. The acts of each were recognised as final and authoritative.

This provision of Russian jurisprudence, which so nearly resembled in its beneficial results, the operation of the Habeas Corpus Act, was due alone to the enlightened sagacity and benevolence of Catherine; nor can we, by any possibility, appreciate the incalculable amount of good which was effected by it, in a land of absolute and corrupt nobles, and of wealthy and irresponsible proprietors, who had long been accustomed

to exercise their petty tyranny over the lives, the fortunes, and the liberty of unhappy millions.

In 1788, an incident occurred in the history of Catherine's hostile preparations against Turkey, which is not devoid of interest to American readers. In the Russian fleet, there had long been a scarcity of native officers possessed of the ability and experience requisite to conduct the operations of the navy of the Empress with success. As far as possible, Catherine supplied this deficiency by the use of foreigners; and the termination of the American Revolutionary war, which occurred previous to this period, afforded a considerable supply of young English and American officers; who, unable to endure a life of inactivity, were willing and eager to enter into any honourable service.

These men were valuable accessions to Russia. Foreign adventurers of this class then swarmed to the Russian capital. Of this number was the celebrated American hero, *Paul Jones*, who rendered such essential service to the cause of human freedom, by his valour on the high seas, during that celebrated struggle. He was gladly received at the court of St. Petersburg. He was immediately appointed to an important command in the grand fleet, which was under equipment at Cronstadt. The English officers, many of whom had already enlisted in the Russian service, considered this appointment as the highest indignity which could be put upon them. Thirty

of them, accordingly, went in a body, and regardless of the losses which they thereby incurred, laid down their commissions; declared that they could not, under any circumstances, degrade themselves to serve with a pirate and a renegade; and demanded that Paul Jones should either be dismissed from his appointment, or their resignations be accepted.

Nothing could have been more embarrassing, just at this period, to Catherine, than this course of conduct, pursued by so many of the most valuable officers in her service. Yet that course was nothing less than a marked insult to the Russian sovereign It was setting up the punctilios of honour, in opposition to the prerogatives of imperial command; for Paul Jones occupied his position in consequence of the express order and approval of the Empress. Any submission by her, to such an unheard of invasion of her supremacy, would be a grievous degradation of her dignity; and would beside, be setting a most dangerous and troublesome precedent to her own subjects. It was indeed fortunate that these recusant officers were not the subjects of some insignificant government, who could not have avenged their punishment, else they would have paid the forfeit of their arrogance with their lives. It was also well for them that this conduct had not occurred in time of peace, when their services could be dispensed with. As it was, the pressing necessity of the times prevailed. The appointment of Paul Jones to a command in the Cronstadt fleet, was re-

called; but he received an honourable equivalent in being appointed second in command to the Prince of Nassau, in the Russian armament on the Euxine. But the inveterate hostility of his enemies did not cease here. They raised a report of an unusually scandalous character, respecting him and a girl of St. Petersburg; the odium of which finally induced him to quit for ever the Russian territories. He thence went to Paris, where he became distinguished among the leaders of the French Democrats or Radicals, who then possessed the helm of affairs, in that city. There he shortly afterward died; and his remains were attended to the grave by a deputation of the National Convention. But the conduct of the British officers, on this occasion, does little credit to their character or their memory, in thus insulting a man whose only fault was, that he had been a victorious champion of liberty, and able opponent of British tyranny.

We should do signal injustice to the memory of this great Empress, did we not present a short account of the events which connect her reign with the immortal name of *Greece.*

Previous to the year 1790, the Greeks had made several strenuous efforts to release themselves from the hated burden of Turkish tyranny. These exertions had all been unavailing, and the descendants of Miltiades and Themistocles still groaned under a yoke, far more degrading than that of Persian bondage. The Turks exhausted upon them every species of cruelty

which the imagination can conceive, or unhappy men could endure. The Greeks were eager for revenge. They suspected the ambitious designs of Catherine in reference to the sovereignty of Constantinople; and they determined to send a commission to St. Petersburg, to treat with her on the subject. On her part, she distributed manifestoes throughout all the Grecian isles, inviting the Greeks to take up arms, and unite with her, in support of their common religion, and in defiance of their common enemy.

Soltire, a Greek distinguished in the service of Russia, was sent to Epirus in Albania, for the purpose of preparing the chief men of that region for a speedy insurrection. An army was soon assembled in the neighbourhood of that city, which marched to attack the Pasha of Yanina, whom they defeated in a pitched battle; killed his son and heir during the engagement; and sent his brilliant armour as a trophy to the Empress. Encouraged by this success, and the assistance of Catherine, the Greeks now fitted out at Trieste twelve small vessels, and placed them under the command of Canziani, an intrepid seamen of their own nation. Constantinople was filled with consternation, as the news was wafted up the Archipelago, that the Grecian armament was approaching the city of the Cæsars. Orders were given to all the Turkish ships in the Euxine, to repass the Bosphorus, to stop the progress of the invading force. In the mean time, Catherine

sent them supplies of money and ammunition, and despatched her emissaries to remove the obstacles to the triumph of the Greeks, which the sordid jealousy of the Venetians had thrown in their way. But the emissaries of the Empress were unhappily dishonest and unprincipled; and appropriated to themselves, the sums which she had destined for another and a nobler purpose.

Exasperated at this conduct, the Greeks sent a deputation to St. Petersburg to make their statements and complaints to the Empress. At first they endeavoured in vain to obtain an audience. Some of those strong influences were at work, which so often shut out from the ears of sovereigns, those complaints which it were well for themselves and for their subjects, that they oftener heard and obeyed. But at last, by means of the favourite Zubof, they obtained a private audience of the Empress, and presented her a memorial, in Greek and in French, setting forth their grievances, and the objects of their mission. After asking for the assistance which they so much needed, they proceeded in eloquent language to urge upon Catherine the fulfilment of her magnificent projects of conquest and aggrandisement. Said they: "Our splendid ruins, and the monuments of the ancient prosperity of Greece, proclaim our pristine grandeur. Our innumerable seaports, our beautiful country, the sky serenely smiling on us throughout the year, the bravery of our noble youths, and the heroism of

our nobler women, all attest that Grecian valour and heroism have not become extinct, by the long lapse of ages;—we are still the Greeks of our forefathers. Give us your grandson Constantine as our sovereign. It is the wish of our nation that he should be our King; and we will be his faithful subjects, and the subjects of your Majesty."

Catherine heard the memorial of the Grecian emissaries with attention and respect. From the presence chamber, they were conducted to the apartments of her grandson Constantine. They there presented their homage to the young Prince, and explained to him in Greek the object of their mission, and styled him their Emperor. He answered them in the same language, which he had doubtless been taught with reference to the exigencies of his future destiny, and said · "Go, and let everything be done according to your wishes." They received from Catherine the means of increasing their naval forces, already under the command of Canziani, together with cannon and engineers. They returned to Sulli, then the residence of their congress, whence they kept up a correspondence with all Greece.

The Greeks now entertained splendid hopes. They expected to raise an army of one hundred thousand men; and with these, together with the auxiliary Russian forces, to march at once upon Constantinople; to punish by one fell and all-destroying act of vengeance, the wrongs, the cruelties, the in-

calculable curses which the Turks had during previous generations inflicted upon them; and for ever banish the Ottoman power from the confines of Europe. These brilliant hopes, and this glorious revenge, might indeed have been the portion of the deseendants of the heroes of Marathon, had it not been for the sudden operation of several unfavourable causes.

The first of these causes was the assembling of a hundred and fifty thousand Prussians on the frontiers of Bohemia; next, the signing of the treaty between Austria and Prussia at Reichenbach; and lastly, the hostile feelings exhibited by the court of London toward that of St. Petersburg. All these changes in the political word, compelled Russia to husband her resources for her own defence; and to keep herself in readiness to meet any attacks which might be made upon her, by any of the powerful enemies by whom she was surrounded. She was unable at that time, to detach any of her resources from the protection of her own interests, to the defence of that of others.

Catherine II., taking this sagacious view of things, was constrained to advise her Greek allies to keep themselves in readiness for future action, but to undertake nothing further at that time (1791), or until a more favourable opportunity for action presented itself. Thus ended, without the attainment of any important result, the interest and the interference of the Empress in the affairs of Greece;—of that land whose

brilliant genius, in ancient days, had been the admiration and wonder of so many ages; and whose subsequent degradation and sufferings had been the subject of so much pity and indignation. It was reserved, in the decrees of Fate, for the heroes of a later period, to achieve for Greece that freedom, of which her classic soil is the natural birth-place, and most congenial home. There was something striking in the association of ideas presented to the mind, by this proposed offensive alliance between Greece and Russia; between the outraged children of Freedom, and the great representative of Despotism. The true secret of Catherine's temporary interest in the liberty and deliverance of Greece from the Ottoman power, was doubtless to be found in the fact, *not* that she loved Greece and freedom well, but that she hated the Turkish dominion and empire more. Had she achieved the independence of the Greeks, she would doubtless have rolled on the mighty tide of her conquests to the gates of Constantinople. That tide would have submerged beneath its waves her gorgeous palaces and citadels, and the whole eastern empire of the Cæsars. Nor would that flood have receded, in its stupendous sweep, until both Greece and Turkey, both Athens and Constantinople, had acknowledged the supremacy of the great Russian sovereign, thus become the mighty and undisputed monarch of a continent. Then perhaps, her ambition had been satiated, and her grasping spirit been at rest;—but not till then!

CHAPTER XIX.

FINAL DISMEMBERMENT OF POLAND RESOLVED UPON BY CATHERINE AND HER COURTIERS.—THE KING OF PRUSSIA UNITES WITH CATHERINE IN THIS PROJECT.—POLISH STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM.—KOSCIUSKO.—HEROIC BUT FUTILE STRUGGLES OF THE POLES.—KOSCIUSKO DEFENDS WARSAW.—HE IS TAKEN PRISONER.—SENT TO ST. PETERSBURG.—ASSASSINATION OF GUSTAVUS III. OF SWEDEN.—DEATH OF JOSEPH II. OF AUSTRIA.—CATHERINE DETERMINES ON HER FINAL INVASION OF TURKEY AND ASSAULT OF CONSTANTINOPLE.—HER SUDDEN DEATH.—THE GRAND DUKE SUCCEEDS TO THE RUSSIAN THRONE —EXAMINATION OF CATHERINE'S CHARACTER AND MERITS.

In January, 1792, the imperial Catherine, softly reclining in the gilded boudoir of her palace, was engaged in a private conference respecting high matters of state, with her favourite Zubof, and his political Mentor, Markof. The favourite, since the departure of Potempkin, had suddenly aspired to the direction of political affairs; he would be a statesman as well as a lover. This Markof was his confidant and flatterer, and from occupying that position toward the favourite, he soon came to occupy it toward the Empress.

At the meeting in question, the subject of discussion was a delicate one. It was none other than the final and complete dismemberment of Poland,—the chivalrous land of Sobieski and

Kosciusko; so that the most execrable deed recorded in the political annals of the world, owes its origin, and had its birth-place, amid the soft dalliance which adorned, or disgraced, the chosen retreats of imperial love and feminine affection. There, surrounded by every luxury which the fertile fancy and exquisite taste of courtiers can devise, these favourites of fortune coolly determined upon the destruction of the liberties and dearest rights of millions of their fellow-creatures; knowing perfectly well, that they possessed the means of executing, on the devastated plains of Poland, the infamous purposes which they might have decreed, amid the splendours of the imperial palace in St Petersburg; and that their vainest caprices would be rigidly fulfilled, though it should cost the blood and the tears of unhappy and ruined thousands of their fellow-men

Little cared they however, for the consequences which might ensue upon their decrees, provided their ambition and their avarice were gratified, and the spoils of a desolated land strewed around their path. At this period, the Poles might have brought into the field an effective army of fifty thousand men, had not their leaders been unfortunately divided among themselves, as for previous generations they had ever been, to the great injury of the interests of their country.

The sovereigns of Russia and Prussia were not without a specious pretext for their conduct. In the manifesto which she published at the time, Catherine says: "Her Imperial

Majesty hath hitherto taken, in the affairs of Poland, a part that has always been tending to the interest of both kingdoms Her efforts to maintain peace among the Poles have been unavailing. Thirty years of experience has evinced this, in the numerous internal disputes which have distracted the Polish Republic. She has viewed their sufferings with compassion, considering them as descended from the same race, and professing the same holy Christian religion,—her Imperial Majesty intends to place them upon an equality with the Russians, and she expects in return, their gratitude and obedience."

Meanwhile Catherine was maturing her plans, as well by negotiation and intrigue, as by the force of arms. She secretly won over Felix Potocky, and many others of the leading Poles She insisted that the king, Stanislaus Augustus, should assert, by a public proclamation, that the interests of Poland required that she should become fully incorporated with the Russian empire. To this disgraceful necessity Stanislaus was forced to submit. After the dismemberment of Poland, and the destruction of his throne, he retired first to Grodno, and afterward to St. Petersburg, where he died in February, 1798. He was invited to the Russian capital by the Emperor Paul, after the death of Catherine. There, the palace of Orlof was assigned him as a residence, and he subsisted in considerable splendour, upon a pension granted him by that sovereign. As

Catherine had placed him upon a throne, which he had never deserved or adorned, so also the same imperial hand now tore off his diadem and reduced him to his original insignificance.

Kosciusko was recalled from Italy to be placed at the head of the Polish troops, destined for the defence of his country. We shall not go into the details connected with that heroic struggle, which has immortalized his name to eternal ages, as one of the noblest champions of human liberty. The Russian troops were led on by that sanguinary veteran, Suwarrof; who afterward became still more illustrious from his struggles against Napoleon. Suffice it to say, that Prague was assaulted and taken; and twenty thousand of its inhabitants fell victims to the fury of the conquerors. Other fierce and bloody conflicts occurred with the invaders, in which heroism and valour were compelled to yield to the power of overwhelming superiority in numbers. Sarmatia yielded at length, and her honoured and chivalrous name was blotted out for ever from the roll of nations.

> Hope for a season bade the world farewell,
> And freedom shrieked, as Kosciusko fell!

The Polish hero, with several of his most distinguished and resolute supporters, were taken captive and sent to St. Petersburg in chains, and a cruel and bloody revenge was inflicted upon thousands of Polish patriots who had risked and sacrificed their all, for the attainment of their country's freedom.

The year 1794 was signalized by the assassination of Catherine's old ally and rival, Gustavus the Third of Sweden. He had rendered himself immensely unpopular throughout his dominions; and three young men resolved to relieve the world of his hated presence. They drew lots for the infamous honour of making the first attack upon his person. A masquerade was chosen for the execution of their plot. Ankarstroem, upon whom the lot had fallen, seized the moment when a group of masks surrounded the doomed sovereign, and discharged a pistol into the small of his back. He expired in great agony, several days afterward, and was succeeded by his son Gustavus, aged fourteen; while the regency of the young prince was intrusted to the Duke of Sudermania.

About the same time, another royal friend and ally of Catherine descended to his grave. This was Leopold, the Emperor of Germany, who died as suddenly, but with circumstances of less horror, at Vienna. He was succeeded by his son, Francis II. While these events were transpiring in the ancient seats of European despotism, an event of the most startling interest had burst upon the world, in the west of Europe; which threatened to shatter all the existing thrones and monarchies to their base, and gave a new aspect to the whole history of human affairs. This event was the French Revolution, which at its outbreak, so highly aroused the hopes of the friends of freedom; but which, by its horrid and san-

guinary excesses, at length excited the disgust and contempt of every rational observer. Russia, the most powerful, as well as the most distant representative of feudal despotism, remained unmoved and unshaken by this memorable outburst of popular power. Catherine contented herself with recalling her ambassador from Paris, and with ceasing to have any diplomatic or commercial relations whatever with a people, whose principles and whose excesses she so much detested. She also refused admission to her court to *M. Genet*, the French *chargé d'affairs* at St. Petersburg, and prohibited her ministers from having any intercourse with him. By these harmless measures she proclaimed to the world her detestation of French principles, without bringing upon herself the charge of cruelty or of sanguinary measures.

The family of the favourite Zubof was now all-powerful in the court of Catherine. His father was the vice-governor of a province, with a salary of sixty thousand rubles. Nicholas, his oldest son, was distinguished for his bravery in Poland, and married the daughter of Marshal Suwarrof. Valerian Zubof held a high military command in the Russian army under the Empress. The sister of the favourite, a lady remarkable for her beauty and her gallantry, was married to the chamberlain Zerebzof. She was also distinguished for her benevolence; and it is recorded of her, that she frequently neglected an assignation with a lover, in order to go and re-

lieve the distressed. She had considerable influence over the Empress, and was as much esteemed for her amiability as she was admired for her accomplishments. Her charms made a violent conquest of the aged and opulent Dimidof, one of Catherine's courtiers, and notwithstanding the immense difference of their ages, she consented to receive his presents, and reward his devotion.

About this time Catherine entered into a new treaty with England, while she published two edicts prohibiting the importation of French merchandise into her kingdom This was a double victory for the English; for while it promoted their commercial interests, it at the same time humbled the fanatics who held Paris in anarchy, who hated the stability of the English throne, and the prosperity of the British nation.

In 1796, Catherine was gratified with the prospect of a matrimonial alliance between the youthful King of Sweden, and her granddaughter, the Duchess Alexandra. This Prince had been betrothed to the Princess of Mecklenburg; but Catherine, with her usual ability, found means to break the match. She then invited the Swedish monarch to visit St. Petersburg, where he was received with regal splendour, and was soon smitten with the charms of the Grand Duchess. Proposals of marriage were made and accepted. A day was fixed for the celebration of the nuptials. But when the contract was presented to the King for his signature, he observed

that the fundamental laws of Sweden obliged him to require that the Princess should previously change her religion. Catherine at first had recourse to flattery and solicitation. But perceiving that these had no effect, she abruptly rose up and retired. She was followed by her son the Grand Duke, the Grand Duchess, and their children. On the next day Gustavus and his retinue quitted St. Petersburg. Nothing further was afterward heard concerning the alliance between the thrones of Sweden and Russia, which it was supposed, would vastly promote the interests of both nations.

To the latest year of her life, Catherine had not resigned the magnificent project, which through all her career had flattered her ambition, and was regarded as the crowning triumph of her glory. This was the expulsion of the Turks from Europe; the capture of Constantinople; and the elevation of her grandson Constantine, to the Ottoman throne. This indeed was an enterprise worthy of her aspirations and of her fame. The new treaty which she had just concluded with England, secured to her the assistance of that power in the furtherance of that stupendous project. Her imagination was excited by the magnificent conception of enlarging her empire far beyond that of even the ancient Cæsars. Her dominions should far exceed in magnitude and grandeur, those of Charlemagne himself. Her vast realms would then extend from the Gulf of Bothnia on the north, to the Thracian Bosphorus on the

south, from the Vistula on the west, to the Sea of Japan on the east.

But alas for the vanity of human hopes, and the certainty of imperial aspirations! While contemplating the fulfilment of this magnificent purpose, the aspiring Empress heard the sudden voice of that remorseless monitor, who summons hence alike, the peasant and the prince, the monarch and the slave. On the morning of the sixth of November, 1796, Catherine arose in good health, and took her coffee as usual. Some time after this she retired to her closet. After remaining there a full half-hour, the women who waited upon her were surprised that she did not return. They began to be alarmed. They at length ventured to enter the apartment in which the Empress was, and they there found her stretched on the par quet, with her feet against the door. She was speechless. A messenger was immediately despatched to Dr. John Rogerson, her Majesty's chief physician. He supposed it to be an attack of apoplexy, and ordered her to be twice bled. This being done, she appeared to be somewhat relieved; but she remained unable to articulate. At ten o'clock in the evening of the succeeding day, her imperial spirit bade the world adieu.

As soon as the danger of the Empress was known, a messenger was despatched for the Grand Duke, who was then at his country palace. He immediately repaired to St. Petersburg, and at the moment of his mother's death, was pro-

claimed Emperor of all the Russias, under the title of Paul I.

The funeral obsequies of the dead Empress were celebrated with appropriate pomp. But during their progress was enacted one of the most singular scenes recorded in the history of kings. After the lapse of thirty-five years, the tomb of the unfortunate Peter III. was opened by the order of the new monarch. On the coffin of that prince he placed the imperial crown, for which he had expressly sent to Moscow. The coffin was then laid in state, by the side of that of his victorious queen, with a true-love-knot reaching from the one to the other, and with these words inscribed upon it: "*Divided in life —united in death!*" Two of the murderers of the Prince still survived; Alexius Orlof, and Prince Baratinsky. By the orders of Paul, they were present at the funeral, and stood during the ceremony of three hours' duration, as chief mourners, one on each side of the coffin of their unhappy victim. The eyes of innumerable spectators were fixed upon them. They there gazed for the last time, upon the mouldering features of him whom they had so deeply wronged and ruined. Alexius Orlof, possessing great vigour of frame, exhibited no emotion. Baratinsky at length became overwhelmed with grief, and would have fainted, had not strong stimulants been applied to resuscitate him. This strange exhibition was universally ascribed to the abhorrence entertained by the new

sovereign, of the bloody deed which had consigned his father to a premature grave. All St. Petersburg was struck with the awful sight, and feeling its justice and propriety, fully expected that some more signal punishment would now alight upon the assassins. But the vengeance of Paul went no further; and they escaped.

Paul secured possession of his throne without opposition, and with the hearty sympathy of his innumerable subjects. His inheritance, in consequence of the successful ambition of his predecessors, was greater far than had ever before fallen to the lot of the Muscovite sovereigns. The succession of the throne has remained ever since uninterruptedly in the possession of his descendants; and sanguinary scenes of violence and murder no longer disgrace the annals of the imperial family.

Before taking leave of the subject of our history, it will be our duty—though by no means an easy one—to estimate the character of the Princess who has engaged our attention, and designate what place she deserves to occupy among that great throng of heroes, whose deeds have adorned, or disgraced, the annals of human history.

That Catherine possessed great talents no discerning person will deny. Hers was a powerful, a masculine mind; keen, sagacious and comprehensive. There was one attribute which characterized her actions, which is always an indication of a

superior intellect:—a boldness of movement, and a vastness of proportion in her conceptions, which have ever been peculiar to master spirits,—to Alexander, to Frederic the Great, to Napoleon. When for instance she purposed to effect a revolution, she struck fearlessly and desperately at the consecrated head of him, who sat upon the pinnacle of power. When she aspired to conquest, she grasped at least a kingdom; and menaced more than once, the mighty capital of the Constantines. When we consider the munificence of her generosity; how she presented to her favourites palaces and provinces, with the same facility with which other sovereigns give away swords and commissions; when we contemplate her resolution in vanquishing the obstacles of physical nature, in moving stupendous masses of rock from their immemorial beds, to grace the seats of civilization and refinement; we must reverence that powerful genius, which could in everything, be so resolute and so unconquerable.

Catherine possessed a mind, whose comprehensiveness rendered her perfectly at home, in every department of her complicated duty, as the legislator and administrator of the interests of an immense and heterogeneous empire. From her magnificent palace on the banks of the Neva, surrounded by her brilliant court and capital, her eagle eye ranged abroad over one-half of Europe and of Asia; her minute cares extended to the wants of the uncounted multitudes, who looked

up to her as their great protectress and friend; and the winds of Tartary from the one continent, and the breezes of Poland from the other, as they fanned her imperial brow, wafted to her ears the praises of the grateful millions over whom her jurisdiction extended, and for whose good her cares were ever active and vigilant.

And yet, combined with all this grandeur and sublimity of character, how feminine, how tender, how susceptible to every affectionate and endearing emotion of woman's heart, was she! It is true, she was accessary to her husband's death. But that husband had brutally insulted her; had resolved to exclude her from the throne; to repudiate her son; and to consign her to infamy, perhaps to death. It was the dictate of the inexorable law of self-preservation, that he should die; that the weaker should be crushed by the stronger; and he fell a victim to his unhappy and inevitable destiny But to those who loved and respected her; and especially to those for whom she felt that most powerful of all emotions—sexual attachment—how devoted and how intense were her feelings; how great and how munificent were her sacrifices;—perhaps indeed, without a parallel, even in the wondrous annals of woman's love. She was doubtless ambitious; and to that passion is to be ascribed the partition of Poland, and her other deeds of conquest and aggression. But ambition has ever been the weakness of the noblest minds; and seems to be an insepa-

rable accompaniment of their other exalted qualities. That she was crafty and artful cannot be denied. But she had been taught from her earliest youth, that policy was the safest guide for the actions of sovereigns; and the difficult and perilous circumstances in which she was often placed, compelled her to resort sometimes to means which alone would have succeeded, when every ingenuous effort must have failed.*—In a word, after calmly surveying all her merits and her demerits, and taking into impartial view the peculiar circumstances of peril, of temptation, and of difficulty by which she was surrounded, we think that the most rigid censor of human conduct, and of human weakness, must freely ascribe to her every element of female greatness, excepting female virtue She has long since passed away from the scenes of her toils and her successes; no more shall her active spirit love or hate; no more shall her genius bless or curse mankind. The voice of honour cannot now awake her silent dust, nor words of flattery soothe "the dull, cold ear of death." But let us be

* Yet the greatest stain which is affixed to the character of Catherine is that, as the correspondent of Voltaire, Frederic the Great, Diderot, and the French infidels, she partook of their infidel sentiments, and in private, made a jest of that inspired religion, whose services, from motives of policy, she publicly observed with hypocritical respect. Partaking of the sentiments of these men, she was, like them, in reference to political affairs, hollow-hearted, unscrupulous, and governed only by ambition and interest, without much regard either to justice, honour, or probity

just, and even generous, to the departed. Surely hers was a noble existence of high aspiration and splendid triumph. Hers was a colossal and original character, exhibiting indeed some evil, but possessing far greater good, which liberal and enlightened men, of every clime and every age, will contemplate with feelings of admiration. They will at least entertain respect for the vigour of her genius, and honour her for the brilliant achievements of her reign.

CHAPTER XX.

BRIEF SURVEY OF THE ROMANOFF DYNASTY.

ACCESSION OF PAUL I.—HIS ECCENTRICITIES.—HIS FAMILY.—HIS ASSASSINATION.—ALEXANDER I. ASCENDS THE THRONE.—HIS CHARACTER.—HIS CONNECTION WITH NAPOLEON.—HIS DEATH —THE GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE.—ACCESSION OF NICHOLAS I.—HIS CHARACTER AND AMBITIOUS AIMS.—THE CONQUEST OF CONSTANTINOPLE.—THE WAR IN THE CRIMEA.—DEATH OF NICHOLAS.—ACCESSION OF ALEXANDER II.—HIS CHARACTER.—OTHER MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY.—CONCLUSION.

THE terrific shriek which the mighty Catherine uttered, and which resounded through the sumptuous halls of her palace, in the moment of her expiring agony, was the voice which proclaimed her unfortunate son, Paul, the Emperor of all the Russias. Had she been able to speak, during the long trance in which she lay previous to her death, it is probable that Paul had never ascended the throne; but that she would have designated her grandson, and favorite, the Grand Duke Alexander, as his immediate successor.

During her earlier years, Paul I. had exhibited many admirable traits of character. He displayed good sense, activity of mind, a fondness for learning, and a love of order and justice. Nearly all these qualities, however, were crushed and

obliterated by the long system of persecution which he underwent at the hands of his mother. It has been supposed, that her unceasing prejudice against him, was an unanswerable proof that he was was the son of her hated and murdered husband, Peter III.; and that he was not a Finnish foundling, as some have asserted. During the many years of his mother's reign, she kept him at a distance from her person; she exposed him to every kind of humiliation; and compelled him constantly to live in retirement, insignificance and even want.

At the age of forty-two, he was called to the throne; and he immediately displayed such excellent qualities, as to excite the astonishment, and elicit the acclamations of his subjects. He abstained from inflicting any personal vengeance upon the courtiers and ministers, who had, for so many years, treated him with indignity. Every day some new and wise measure was announced, some just punishment inflicted, or some well merited reward bestowed. Among other acts which won the praise of all discerning people, was the release of Kosciusko, who, for many years, had been confined in the fortress of Schlusselberg. Paul not only struck off the fetters of this great man, but bestowed upon him a large sum of money, which enabled him to live independently for the rest of his days. The new emperor sought out and recalled from poverty and obscurity, those few officers who still survived the assassination of his unfortunate father, Peter III., and who had endeavored, but in vain, to

avert that bloody and cruel catastrophe. Among these was Baron Sternberg, formerly aid-de-camp to Peter; whom he immediately made general-in-chief, and adorned with the riband of St. Alexander.

But these favorable displays of character did not long continue; and Paul began those unfortunate errors of his reign, which eventually led to his ruin, by exhibiting such eccentricities of conduct as very soon rendered him contemptible. On one occasion his horse stumbled with him in one of the streets of St. Peterburg. He alighted immediately; held a sort of consultation with his attendants; and then condemned the horse to receive fifty lashes with a whip. Paul commanded them to be given on the spot, surrounded by the populace; and as he counted the strokes, continually repeated · "There sir that is for having stumbled with the Emperor."

Notwithstanding the promise which he had given to Zubof, the last favorite of Catherine, that he should retain his emoluments and standing at court, he soon expelled him ignominiously from both; and although this step in itself was not objectionable, yet his vacillation of mind, and his unjust expulsion from their offices of nearly all the oldest and most experienced ministers of the empire, showed that his habitual want of discretion was again governing his conduct. He forbade round hats to be worn in Russia; and commanded that thenceforth no Russian should harness horses in the usual way; but allowed

his subjects two weeks' time to provide themselves with harness from Germany.

At the court balls the dancers were obliged to twist themselves in every possible way, in order not to turn their backs upon him, when dancing, wherever he might be! He subsequently issued a ukase forbidding the use of frock coats and pantaloons; he ordered the Academy of Sciences never to use the word *Revolution*, when speaking of the movements of the heavenly bodies; and commanded the players always to substitute the word *permission*, instead of *liberty*, in their public representations in the theatres.

Paul was twice married. His first wife was Nathalie Alexievna, princess of Hesse Darmstadt, who died in 1776. By her he had no children. His second wife was Marie Fedeorovna, princess of Wurtemberg, who died in 1828. By her he had ten children. Their names are given below.* In his domestic habits, he was not objectionable. He treated his wife and children with tenderness and affection. His only blemish in this respect was, that he indulged in several illicit connexions

*Alexander, born 1777, died 1825; Constantine, born 1779, died 1831; Alexandrina, born 1783, married to Joseph, palatine of Hungary, died 1801; Helena, born 1784, married to Frederick, prince of Mecklenburg Strelitz, died in 1816; Maria, born 1786, married to Charles, grand duke of Saxe Weimar; Catharine, born 1788, married first to prince George of Holstein Oldenburg; secondly to William I., King of Wurtemberg, died in 1819; Olga, born 1792,

with women; although his character might be said to have been purity itself, compared with that of his mother.

The evils attendant upon the perverted misgovernment of Paul, rapidly increased. During the four years of his reign, he had concluded and broken off treaties with nearly all the European powers. Constant changes were made both in the officers of the empire, and in the measures adopted. His barber, Count Kutaizow, at length became his favorite, and finally his prime minister; and his increasing acts of caprice, extravagance and severity, were gradually raising around him a formidable body of secret enemies, whose power was only equaled by their hostility. Their enmity gradually, but inevitably, took the shape of an organized conspiracy against his life and throne. This conspiracy made its bold and desperate strike on the 23d of March, 1801, and ended this unfortunate sovereign's career, by his violent death. The conspirators, at night, rushed into his bedroom, but found his bed empty. The Zubofs, Benningsen, Tolstoi, and Ouvarof immediately began to search the apartment. Paul was found secreted behind a screen. He was dragged forth, and commanded immediately

died 1795; Anne, born 1795, married to William II., king of Holland; Nicholas, born 1796, died 1855; Michael, born 1798, died 1852.

A list of the immediate descendants of Paul I., is given on a preceding page of this volume; but it is not as minute and accurate n its details as the above.

to sign his abdication. He refused, and was strangled with a scarf, after a desperate resistance. He died at the age of forty-six.

He was succeeded by his eldest son, Alexander. This prince had supped with his father at eight o'clock on the evening of the 23d of March; was informed of his death at nine, and at ten, he assumed the sceptre which had been so ignominiously wrested from his grasp. Alexander was not ignorant of the plans and purposes of the conspirators, and seems to have approved them. His chief defect of character was his want of decision. He possessed a mind of considerable acuteness; and a peculiarly winning grace of manner. He ascended the throne at the age of twenty-five; and his accession was hailed with universal joy, by a nation wearied and disgusted with the insane follies of his predecessor.

Alexander possessed a handsome person, and was well meaning in his purposes, but like all those whose minds are deficient in energy and self-reliance, he was a dissembler. Napoleon declared respecting him, at St. Helena: "The Emperor of Russia possesses abilities, grace, and information; but one cannot trust him. He is a true Greek of the Lower Empire. He pretended to be metaphysical; and on one occasion, argued with me, for a whole hour, that hereditary right was an abuse, and I had to expend all my learning and eloquence to convince him, that hereditary right maintains the repose and happiness

of nations. Perhaps he wished merely to mistify me; for he is cunning, false, and skillful."

During his younger years, Alexander had been the favorite of his grand-mother, Catherine II.; but she died before he had arrived at an age sufficiently mature, to become corrupted in his morals by that great *Circe* of the North, who seduced and contaminated all who came within the reach of her influence. He commenced his reign by effecting many reforms, which were much needed; and by canceling the most obnoxious measures and institutions which had been established by Paul. He arose to an European importance, only when he was thrown into connection with the mightier Napoleon. At first he joined Austria and Prussia against that Colossus; but after his own defeat by Napoleon at Friedland, in 1807, he was glad to conclude a truce with his foe at Tilsit.

It was during the conferences held at Tilsit, that the ambitious Corsican astounded and regaled the Czar, with his stupendous plans and schemes for a universal Duocracy, by which the empire not only of Europe, but also of the world, was to be divided between the two sovereigns of Russia and France. He then became the ally of Napoleon, and the foe of his ancient friend, the king of Prussia. But the two great autocrats could not long harmonize. Napoleon soon began to display his ultimate purpose, which was that the *Duocracy* which he had proposed, should ultimately be melted down into a *Monocracy*, of

which he alone should be the supreme head. Alexander took offensive measures, and while Napoleon was humbling Austria for the fourth time, Alexander marched into Finland, attacked Gustavus of Sweden, by surprise, bought over the commandants of the fortresses of Sweaborg, Helsingford, and other strongholds of the Baltic, and reduced the Grand-duchy under his sway.

At the southern extremity of his empire, Alexander attacked Turkey and wrested Bessarabia from the feeble grasp of the Sultan. Alexander demanded of Napoleon that he would yield to him Wallachia and Moldavia, and the refusal of the French emperor to accede to this request, led to a wider breach between them, which finally resulted in the open breach, and war of 1812. It was during this memorable campaign that Napoleon's march to Moscow, and the conflagration of that city took place.

In 1815, after the battle of Waterloo, Europe, so violently convulsed by the prodigious throes of the great Corsican's ambition, sank into a long and deep repose. Alexander then confined himself to the administration of the affairs of his own empire; but his later years were embittered by the secret projects and schemes of liberalists and conspirators, who wished to introduce a constitutional form of government into Russia. It is also said that his whole life was saddened by the recollection of his connection with the cruel murder of his father,

which, if he did not directly promote, he might have effectually prevented.

In 1825, Alexander determined to make a tour in the Crimea, then as now, one of the richest garden-spots of Europe. This domain had been added to the Russian empire, by the ambitious Catherine. It was at Taganrog, that he was attacked with symptoms of bilious remittent fever. He rejected all medical aid, and died there, on the 1st of December, 1825. It was for a long time supposed that he had fallen a victim to poison; and the subsequent sudden deaths of his brother Constantine, of General Diebitch, and others, have been ascribed to Count Gregory Orloff, afterward minister of police, under Nicholas. How true these dark surmises may have been, it is impossible now to decide; but it is certain that the latter years of Alexander were clouded by dark and fearful forebodings, that he should eventually suffer the violent end, which had, in so many instances, been the fate of his imperial ancestors, and which he had himself apportioned to his predecessor.

Immediately upon the death of Alexander, Constantine, his legal successor, instantly dispatched his brother Michael from Warsaw, with a letter to Nicholas, containing a formal confirmation of the act of 1822, by which he had voluntarily resigned the throne to the latter. An insurrection ensued in St. Petersburg, in consequence of the apprehension which pre-

vailed that this act was forged, and that Constantine had been unjustly excluded from his rightful inheritance. In a few hours, however, the energy and decision of Nicholas suppressed the revolt, and he ascended the throne of his ancestors on December 24th, 1825.

This celebrated prince was born in 1796, and was regarded as the handsomest man in his empire. His manners were cold, inanimate, and without any attractive quality. His features were stern and severe; and all those who have written respecting him, agree in celebrating the piercing and penetrating power of his eye. A Russian nobleman narrates the case of a young lover, who had accidentally wandered, in a state of abstraction, into one of the parks of the palace, and suddenly found himself in the presence of this imperial Phœnix, whose terrible glance was fixed sternly and coldly upon him. A violent fever was the consequence, which after a few days ended fatally, resulting from the excessive terror of the unfortunate culprit.

To see this man, who seemed thus born to sway the rod of empire over his fellow men, in all his glory, it was necessary to attend one of his grand reviews at St. Petersburg, where he really appeared as the worthy sovereign of seventy millions of men. Then, dressed in the splendid scarlet uniform of the Cossacks of the Guard, he looked every inch a monarch; and his clear and sonorous voice, in giving the word of command,

rang loudly along the serried lines of his warriors, and reverberated over the plain.*

It was his practice to walk daily through the streets of his capital; and when saluted by the passers-by, he uniformly and graciously returned it. But no one had a right to address him, or present him a petition in the streets, under penalty of

* "The amiable author of 'Letters from the Baltic' describes the Czar as a figure to which there is no second in Russia, if in the world itself: a figure of the grandest beauty, expression, dimension, and carriage, uniting all the majesties and the graces of all the heathen gods—the little God of Love alone, perhaps, excepted—on ts ample and symmetrical proportions. Had this nobility of person belonged to a common Mugik instead of the Autocrat of the Russias, the admiration could not have been less, nor scarcely the feeling of moral awe. It was not the monarch who was so magnicent, but the man who was so truly imperial.

"The person of the Emperor is that of a colossal man, in the full prime of life and health, fifty-four years of age, about six feet two inches high, and well filled out, without any approach to corpulency; the head magnificently carried, a splendid breadth of shoulder and chest, great length and symmetry of limb, with finely-formed hands and feet. His face is strictly Grecian; forehead and nose in one grand line; the eyes finely lined, large, open, and blue, with a calmness, a boldness, a freezing dignity, which can equally quell an insurrection, daunt an assassin, or paralyze a petitioner; the mouth regular, teeth fine, chin prominent, with dark moustache and small whisker, but not a sympathy on his face! His mouth sometimes smiled, his eyes never! There was that in his look which no monarch's subject could meet. His eye seeks every one's gaze, but none can confront his."

arrest. Sometimes, like Haroun-al-Raschid, Nicholas amused himself by going about incognito. Many adventures are narrated, as having occurred to him, on these excursions; in all of which he displayed his usual courage, and sometimes more than his wonted forbearance and amiability. He could at times forget that he was an Autocrat.

Nevertheless, in all his public acts as a sovereign, Nicholas was a despotic tyrant. He was the great bulwark of Absolutism in the nineteenth century; and his stupendous power and influence were all employed in resisting the advances of rational liberty throughout the world, and in building up the tottering thrones, and strengthening the rotten dynasties, of Europe. Nicholas was ever actuated by a far-reaching ambition; and the ultimate aim of all his measures during a long course of years, from the day on which he commenced to reign, until that of his death, was the realization of one brilliant idea; and that was, the capture of Constantinople, and the subjugation of the Turkish dominion to his own.

It was this stupendous and glittering prize which first fired the ambition of the great Catherine, and which Potempkin once fondly hoped to realize, even in his day. This same idea had a prominent place in the heart of the gentler Alexander; but when the stronger arm of Nicholas grasped the sceptre of the Czars, the accomplishment of this vast scheme seemed to be nearer and surer than before. The day did not appear to be

very far distant, when the vanquished and suppliant Sultan would be seen bending his knee in submission before the haughty and triumphant Muscovite, in his northern capital; and when Constantinople, for a thousand years the centre of Moslem power, glory, conquest and religion, would open her "golden gates" to an all-conquering king, and be ruled by him with a rod of iron, as a mere appendage to his greater throne and empire.

In furtherance of this purpose, Nicholas carried on the war of 1828–29 with Turkey. For this, he commenced and waged a bloody conflict in the Caucasus, and dissolved the republic of Cracow. And for this, had he advanced such monstrous and unjust claims, respecting his right to interfere with the sovereignty of Turkey over her own Greek subjects, that even the lethargic "sick man," who feebly reposes and dreams away his voluptuous existence amid oriental luxury at Stamboul, was aroused to indignant resistance, while the rest of Europe was startled into apprehension for the future balance of power in the East. In furtherance of this stupendous project of ambition, the mighty Nicholas, in a word, commenced the present war, which has for several years convulsed and afflicted christendom.

During the visit which Nicholas made to England, in the year 1844, the Eastern Question became the subject of conversation between him and the then existing English govern-

ment. No particular difficulty at that time seemed to be impending, in reference to it, and the sentiments then expressed by the Czar were utterly at variance with those subsequently announced by him on the commencement of the war. Immediately on his return to St. Petersburg, he sent a "*memorandum*" to Lord Aberdeen, containing at length his professed opinions on the subject. They were such as the following: That the great aim of the European powers should be, the maintenance of the Turkish sovereignty, precisely as it then was, and that the several powers should abstain from making any demands upon Turkey of a selfish nature, and should not undertake to dictate in any authoritative manner to the Sultan, respecting the internal government of his dominions. He also held, that if the Porte gave any of these powers cause for just complaint, that power should be assisted by the rest, in having that cause of complaint removed; and that, in any case, the powers should use their best endeavors with the christian subjects of the Porte, to continue their allegiance to it. He also suggested that the alliance between Russia and England should, under all circumstances, remain unimpaired and undisturbed. Such were the professed sentiments of Nicholas in 1844.

When the Revolution of 1848 broke out in Paris, Nicholas exclaimed to the officers of his guard: "Gentlemen, prepare to mount your horses!" This outbreak seemed to produce the same effect upon him, of terror and apprehension, which

the opening scenes of the first French Revolution did upon the Empress Catherine II. His sentiments of amity and esteem for the powers of Western Europe immediately seemed to change; and he commenced to revolve in his mind a system of exclusive selfishness and hostility toward all those who were either parties, or neighbors, to the detestable movement which precipitated the cloaked despot, Louis Philippe, from his throne.

During the heroic struggles of the Hungarians in 1849, against Austria, for the independence and glory of their country, Nicholas interposed; threw his vast armies upon the Hungarian forces; and secured the immense domains of the Magyars to the tottering throne of the house of Hapsburg, after the Austrian troops had all been twice expelled from the territories of Hungary by the Revolutionists. And even then, it is not improbable that the combined power of Austria and Russia would have failed to subjugate a nation determined to strike a death blow to tyranny, or else themselves to perish in the attempt, had not the infamous traitor, Gorgei, directly betrayed the best army and strongest fortress of Hungary, to his country's foes, for gold.

After the disastrous end of this revolution, Nicholas had leisure to resume his aggressive schemes in reference to Turkey. It was in 1850 that difficulties began to occur between the Greek Christians in Syria, and the government of the Sul

tan. In that country, the Greek clergy had long enjoyed great monopolies, and the precedency over the Latin Christians. Nicholas determined to step in, and interfere in the protection of the rights of the former, and to dictate to the Sultan what course he should pursue in the matter. Prince Menchikoff was immediately sent to Constantinople with the instructions and requirements of the Czar. He paid a visit of ceremony to the Grand Vizier, and to the Patriarch; but none to Faud Effendi, the minister for Foreign Affairs. The two governments immediately became embroiled respecting the "Holy Places" in Palestine.

Through the interposition of Lord Stradford de Redcliffe, the British minister at the Porte, the difficulties were eventually settled, and an open rupture between Russia and Turkey was for the present averted.

But in 1853 the ambitious spirit of Nicholas was again aroused; and spurred on by the successful strides of his enemy, Louis Napoleon, toward the possession of supreme power, he determined no longer to mask his carefully concealed avidity to grasp the sceptre from the Sultan. Prince Menchikoff again appeared in Constantinople, and set forth new and extravagant demands from the Czar. These demands were, that the Russian ambassador to the Porte, should "represent" or protect the grievances of the Greek Christians in the Turkish empire; that the Czar should have the right to the

custody of certain Holy Places in the East; the right to repair the Christian (Greek) churches at Constantinople; *and other claims which would have in fact constituted the Czar the real sovereign of the Greek Christians throughout the Turkish dominions.* To these extravagant and outrageous demands, boldly set forth by Prince Menchikoff, the Sultan at once returned a positive, firm, and unconditional refusal. On his so doing, the government of Prussia and Austria expressed their approbation of the stand taken by the Sultan; and the same concurrence was immediately given by the French and English cabinets.

On receiving the positive and uncompromising denial of the Sultan, to the infamous demands of his master, Prince Menchikoff immediately left Constantinople, and the armies of the Czar at once advanced into the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia, and took military possession of them. The pretext under which this was done was, that the Czar felt compelled to secure a "material guarantee" that the Sultan would eventually yield to his demands. Soon after followed the total and sudden destruction of the Sultan's fleet at Sinope, under circumstances of the greatest atrocity, by the naval armaments of the unscrupulous Czar.

On the third of July, 1853, the Russian divisions passed over into the Danubian principalities, as we have already said. Omer Pasha, the ablest and most experienced of the Turkish

officers, commanded the troops of the Sultan, in those provinces; and it was not very long before the Russian general, Prince Gortchakoff, and he, came to blows. The first pitched battle of this memorable war, was fought on the 2d of November, at Oltenitza. The victory remained with the Turks. Next in order came the battle of Citale, with a similar result. At the siege of Silistria, which soon followed, the so-called "sick-man" seemed to have put on the stupendous vigor and power of his youth, again; and displayed a degree of energy and heroism worthy of his palmiest days, when Barbarossa's great name shook even the stately Venice with terror, as she reposed in majesty on her hundred isles. At Silistria, the Russians were driven from the attack with prodigious losses. Prince Paskiewitz in vain rallied the Russian troops. General Schilders was killed; Luders lost a jaw-bone; Gortchakoff was desperately wounded; and Prince Paskiewitz himself barely escaped with his life. The Russians lost thirty thousand men under the walls of Silistria.

Next came the battle of the Alma. in which the eagles of Allies were again victorious, and the Russians gave up possession of Balaklava to the conquerers, after a feeble resistance. Then followed the triumph of Inkermann, in which the Allies gained their third pitched battle over the Russians; after which, they quietly proceded to draw their lines of circumvallation around Sevastopol, the greatest fortress in the empire.

It may readily be supposed, that an unexpected series of defeats and misfortunes sorely galled the high-mettled and chafing spirit of the haughty Czar. That these reverses produced an important and injurious effect upon his health and spirits, is not denied, by those having the most satisfactory sources of information. On the 2d of March, 1855, all Europe was startled with the sudden news, that the mighty Nicholas was dead! That eagle eye which from afar had gazed upon the glittering turrets of Constantinople, so eager for their possession, now lies rayless and sightless, in the dark vaults of St. Isaac's magnificent temple; and shall never more beam with electric lustre at the head of his far extending legions. God had punished the disturber of the world's repose, by a deadly blow from his own omnipotent hand; and had stripped him forever of the power to terrify and curse his fellow men. He expired, to the joy of the whole universe, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, at St. Petersburg. His disease was pulmonary apoplexy. He was succeeded on the throne by his eldest son, Alexander II.

It is said that the death of Nicholas was accelerated, by his habit of tight lacing, in which he had long indulged. His vanity had led him to practice this absurdity to such an extreme degree, that he often fainted when he ungirthed himself to sleep. A tendency to congestion of the lungs, was an inevitable consequence of this despicable weakness, which undoubt-

edly accelerated his end. *Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat!*

And yet, there were features in the character of the Czar Nicholas, which were neither so imposing, nor so repulsive, as those referred to, on a preceding page.

On one occasion, happening to pass by a restaurant in the capital, he saw an elegantly dressed young man issue from it, smoking a cigar. Nicholas being dressed *incognito*, accosted him, and said: "I presume you are a stranger sir?"

"Yes, sir; how came you to suppose so?"

"Because you are violating the law in reference to smoking.

"Is it possible? Is it forbidden to smoke in St. Petersburg, in the streets?"

"It is so, sir."

"I thank you, then, for the information. I respect the laws above everything, and will immediately cease to smoke."

"Never mind; smoke on; as long as you are with me you are perfectly safe."

"You are, then, I suppose, some distinguished nobleman of the empire?"

"I possess some influence here; and if I can serve you in any way, I'll be happy to do so."

"I will be exceedingly grateful to you, for your kindness. I came here on business; and they tell me, that influence does everything in Russia."

Thus the conversation was continued for some time, while the two gentlemen leisurely continued their walk along the street. The windows of the front shops were full of portraits of the emperor; and yet the stranger failed to observe their resemblance to his companion. At length they passed the last shop in the Great Morskoi, where a magnificent portrait of the Czar adorned the window. Like a thunberbolt the conviction rushed on the mind of the stranger that he had been promenading with the mighty emperor; and he instantly fell upon his knees, exclaiming "Pardon! Pardon! I pray your majesty to forgive me my boldness!" "I forgive you," answered Nicholas, "smoke no more in the street, or I may not always be with you to protect you. Call at the palace to-morrow at 4 o'clock, and I'll see what I can do for you."

It need scarcely be added, that the young man was punctual to the appointment, and that the Czar amply fulfilled his promise.

In 1845, the Russian emperor made a visit to Rome, and it so happened that the celebrated Fanny Ellssler honored, or disgraced, the capital of christendom with her presence at the same time. That artist had but recently visited St. Petersburg, where she had been most graciously received by the Czar; and she supposed that he would readily accord to her the same degree of consideration in Rome. An aid-de-camp of the emperor, to whom she expressed her desire, directed

her to place herself in the way of the emperor when he was passing through one of the galleries of paintings. Accordingly, when the emperor passed by, Md'lle Ellssler, arrayed in her most magnificent toilet, awaited him, expecting to be presented.

"Who is that lady?" inquired Nicholas.

"It is Fanny Ellssler, who desires to be presented to your majesty."

"Fanny Ellssler! and what would the world say, if the emperor of Russia came to Rome, to have ballet-dancers presented to him?" And he passed by the fair and frail *danseuse*, without deigning to give her the least sign of recognition. It is said that she was intensely mortified at the rebuff.

One winter evening, as the emperor passed by one of the guard houses of the capital, he had the curiosity to see what was going on within. He entered. The officer on duty was seated near a table, asleep, but fully accoutred from head to foot. The emperor perceived a piece of paper laying on the table, on which was written, as he discovered, a memorandum of the expenses and receipts of the officer. One item of his expenses was a liberal allowance for the support of his aged mother. His expenses amounted to eight thousand rubles, while his salary only amounted to four thousand. At the foot of the calculation containing the several items of credit and debit, he had written this ominous question: *Who will pay the overplus?* The emperor immediately took the pen, which

lay on the table, and wrote his well known signature — "Nicholas"— below; and then quietly withdrew from the guard house. The surprise and terror of the officer may readily be inferred, when he awoke, and saw the portentous signature before him. The next morning an orderly from the palace brought him four thousand rubles, with a letter from Nicholas, commanding him in future to choose a better time and place to sleep, but still to continue to take care of his mother.

The personal courage of Nicholas has never been doubted. The evidences of this are numerous. When the cholera first visited St. Petersburg, the inhabitants of that city thought that the physicians, foreigners, and Poles, had poisoned the springs. A riot occurred, and some of the most distinguished citizens were murdered. At length, a vast crowd had assembled, which threatened death to all the supposed causes of the plague. The emperor ordered a droschky, and instantly dashed into the midst of the infuriated multitude. Standing up in the droschky, he commanded them, in a loud and imperious tone of voice, to stand back. "Where are you going, you wretches?" he exclaimed; "you are about to murder innocent men. Down on your knees, and ask pardon of God for your own sins, which have brought this scourge upon you." The whole multitude, strangely overawed by the magic power of his heroism and fortitude, immediately knelt, and then gradually and quietly dispersed. Similar resolution and heroism marked his conduct at the

breaking out of the formidable conspiracy which attended his assumption of the imperial purple.

No man, indeed, was more absolute than he, in the accomplishment of all his purposes and whims. In 1845, there was a large and valuable domain to be sold at St. Petersbug. Nicholas had secretly made up his mind to purchase it. Before he was aware of the fact, a purchaser had privately bought it.

Said Nicholas to Nesselrode, "What has become of the domain of the Princess R — ?"

"It is sold, your majesty."

"Sold! Sold! did you say?"

"Yes, sire."

"They have been in a great hurry. Who bought it?"

"The Count M——."

"Very well. *I* wish to buy it. Let the arrangement be broken immediately!"

"But the title deeds are all executed and the domain is paid for."

"Then let them destroy the titles, and restore the money," replied the Czar.

It need scarcely be added, that the command of the Autocrat was instantly obeyed. Such are some of the felicities which attend the lot of those who are born under the dominion of an absolute tyrant. The knout, the battogues, and the dark

and frozen mines of Siberia, will tell the rest of the sad and revolting tale.

Nicholas was succeeded by his eldest son, the Grand Duke Alexander. His mother, the empress, was the daughter of the lamented Louisa, queen of Prussia, whose death was caused by the brutal conduct of Napoleon toward her family and kingdom after the battle of Jena. The late empress of Russia is described as having been a princess of rare beauty, amiability and accomplishment. The Marquis of Londonderry in his "Tour in the North of Europe," speaks of her as follows "The indescribable majesty of deportment and fascinating grace that mark this illustrious personage, are very peculiar. Celebrated as are all the females connected with the lamented and beautiful queen of Prussia, there is none of them more bewitching in manner than the empress of Russia; nor is there existing, according to all reports, so excellent and perfect a being." She enjoyed, notwithstanding the elevation of her position, all the blessings of domestic life. She lived in affection and harmony with her illustrious husband, and was the mother of a numerous progeny of children, whom she reared in the most commendable manner. The chivalrous conduct and honorable deportment of the grand dukes and the matchless beauty and loveliness of the grand duchesses, have been he subject of universal praise throughout Europe.

Alexander I., the youthful monarch who now sways the

sceptre of this prodigious empire, is described as being a prince of considerable merit. He inherits his father's majestic person, and the regularity of his features; but is entirely free from the cold, unsympathizing grandeur of demeanor, which disgraced the latter. He is, on the contrary, amiable and pacific in his disposition. He ascended the throne at the mature age of thirty-five. He is married to the sister of the grand duke of Hesse-Darmstadt,—one of those petty princely families of Germany, which, like the Cobourgs, seem to be perpetuated only as breeding establishments, to supply with more vigorous blood the greater effete dynasties of Europe!

Alexander II. has entered upon his reign, under the most difficult and trying circumstances. He inherited with his throne, the conduct of a most unjust, expensive and infamous war;—a war, during the progress of which, though his troops have displayed considerable skill and bravery, defeat and disaster have, for the most part, atttended their exertions.

The latest event which has occurred between the combatants, has been the most disastrous of all to the Russian arms. Sevastopol, probably the most stupendous fortress of the empire, equal in magnitude and strength to Cronstadt itself, and the great bulwark of Russian power in the Crimea and the Black Sea, has at length fallen; after one of the most memorable and desperate sieges recorded in history. On the 6th of September, 1855, the French and English forces com

menced a bombardment from their works against the defences of the town, extending along a front of four miles; pouring upon the besieged, for three days, an uninterrupted fiery deluge of shot and shell. So destructive was this far-extending and simultaneous attack, that the Russians soon became unable to reply to it from their batteries; although when the assailants attempted to assault the works, they were driven back five times successively, with immense losses, by the determined valor of the Russians. At length, the sixth assault proved successful; and the French troops succeeded in taking, and retaining possession of, the vast fortress of the Malakoff. The English troops also succeeded in effecting an entrance into the Great Redan, and the French into the Central Bastion, but were unable at that time to maintain their positions.

Nevertheless, this triumph of the Allies was of immense importance. The Russians were compelled to evacuate the greater portion of the town. All their line-of-battle ships, which lay in the harbor of Sevastopol—the same which destroyed the Turkish vessels and their crews, with such unparalleled barbarity, at Sinope—were sunk, by the orders of Prince Gortchakoff, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the conquerors. Previous to their retreat, a large portion of the city was blown up by the Russians; and the deserted scene of the most stupendous siege, perhaps, recorded in history, presented to the eye of the observer only a wide waste

of ruined and desolated buildings. The loss of the Allies at this single attack, has been estimated at twenty thousand killed and wounded; and that of the Russians at ten thousand. Two thousand cannon were captured by the victors, together with a vast amount of ammunition.

The English commander, General Simpson, in speaking of this great and decisive triumph, says: "I inspected, to-day, Sevastopol and its line of defences. The mind cannot form an exact picture of our victory—the full extent of it can only be understood by an examination of the place itself. The multiplicity of works of defence, and the material means applied thereto, exceed, by far, anything seen in the history of the war. The capture of the Malakoff has placed in the hands of the allies a large amount of material, and immense establishments."

The fall of Sebastopol has, in truth, struck a deadly blow at the power and supremacy of Russia in the Crimea. Had the great Nicholas lived to witness this crowning ignominy to his vaunting pride, it would have added an additional zest to the exultations of the victors, and to the congratulations of the world. But, happily for himself, he sleeps, where neither the frenzied shouts of triumph, nor the deep curses of the vanquished, can disturb his long repose. It is unquestionably true, that the loss of this great fortress will considerably diminish the formidableness of Russia, in the present war; and

the reflection must indeed be a galling one to the present heir and representative of the aspiring Catherine, that his ablest armies and generals, instead of assaulting and vanquishing Constantinople, as they had proudly hoped, have lost his own most valuable possession in the south, which has thus become the prey of the adverse powers. And we may safely affirm, that whether ultimate victory or defeat will be the final issue of the present war, Alexander II. will inevitably be a loser in the estimation of mankind. If he triumphs, it will be the triumph of unjust aggression over the rights of a weaker and inoffensive sovereign, who justly resisted the unprincipled encroachments of the great Nicholas, upon his own prerogatives. If the Czar be defeated, the prestige of Russian greatness, majesty and power will forever fade away, no longer to terrify and overawe, by its colossal strength, the rest of Europe.

Constantine, the second son of Nicholas, possesses a much more imperious and warlike character than Alexander. He is said to insist upon the fulfillment of his father's ambitious purposes concerning Turkey. He has made himself thoroughly acquainted with the language, laws, and government of that country; and his purpose unquestionably is—should he ever succeed to the throne, which is by no means improbable—to carry forward the great Romanoff idea of the conquest of the Moslem dominions, with all the indomitable resolution and fierceness of his character. He is now high admiral of the

Russian fleets; and is represented as being more than equal in severity and ferocity of temper, to his late uncle, Constantine.

The Grand Duke Michael, the son of Paul I., having been born in 1798, after the accession of his father, was the uncle of the present Czar, and the wealthiest member of the imperial family. His greatest characteristic was a disposition to perpetrate puns. He was tender hearted, and frequently wept when witnessing the ferocities perpetrated by his savage brother Constantine, upon the unfortunate Poles in Warsaw. Michael died in 1849, leaving three daughters and the princess, his wife who was the Grand Duchess Helena, of Wurtemberg. The savage Grand Duke Constantine, who, during his government of Poland, caused so many tears to flow, died in 1831. He has won for himself the disgraceful eminence of having been the most infamous and blood-thirsty tyrant of modern times.

In addition to the present Czar, Nicholas had five children; the Grand Dukes Constantine, Nicholas, and Michael; the Grand Duchess Maria, now the widow of the Duke of Leuchtenberg; and the Princess Olga, whose remarkable resemblance to Louisa, the late queen of Prussia, is the theme of constant note and observation. She has been an invalid for some years.

The imperial dynasty of the Romanoffs, during its past career, has produced at least three individuals, who were pre-

eminent and unrivaled models in their respective departments; and who will stand forth, during all ages to come, as beacon lights, either to attract or to disgust mankind.

The first of these was Peter the Great, a man of vast energy of will, of penetrating sagacity, and of shrewd discernment; who, finding himself, by the accident of his birth, placed upon the throne of a barbarous and obscure kingdom, which was the object of the contempt and derision of the rest of the civilized world, determined to wipe away that hereditary stain, by the elevation and aggrandizement of his people He unquestionably possessed a genius of vast creative and administrative power. Beneath the magic touch of his hand, Russia rapidly emerged from the glooms of barbarism to brighter day of improvement. Magnificent cities and gorgeous palaces soon arose, as by the command of an enchanter, in the midst of her most sterile and watery marshes. Chains of impregnable fortresses, reared their stern battlements along her rocky shores, to defend her territory from the invader's approach. Oriental wealth and barbaric luxury, mellowed and adorned by the elegant refinement and cultivation of Western Europe, were congregated in the midst of her brilliant capitals. Beneath the stroke of his sagacious pen, her laws assumed the form of order, consistency, and permanency. Her armies became the most perfect for discipline, and the most formidable for effectiveness, of any at that time in Eu

rope. Her navy rode triumphant, or least invincible, in every sea, and Russia, from an obscure and unimportant province of the remote and unknown North, rose to the rank of a power of the first magnitude among the greater dynasties of Europe.

The second remarkable personage in the line of the Romanoffs, was Catherine II., of whose character and achievements we need not further speak. It will suffice to say, that they may be concisely summed up in two expressive phrases she was an imperial debauchee and stateswoman, without an equal in either quality, in ancient or in modern times.

The third and last of these great ornaments of the Romanoffs, was the Czar Nicholas. His genius was vast as the consolidator of empire. His talent was preëminent as the skillful moulder of mighty and heterogeneous elements, into one immense, harmonious, and consonant unity. During his reign, he gradually conducted the Russian empire, to a degree of compact discipline and active concentration, which not the old est governments of Europe could surpass, or even emulate He had perfected all the details of administration to their ex tremest limits, and minutest subdivisions, until it might almost with truth be said, that the countless myriads of Russian hearts, who acknowledged his sceptre, beat in perfect unison with, and subjection to, his own; and that his subjects went through all the details of existence as directed by him, with the regularity and unity of one stupendous clock-work. And

it is not improbable, that with the death of Nicholas I., the period of Russian supremacy, and especially, of the transcendent glory of the Romanoffs, has terminated forever.

One ground upon which we feel justified in making this assertion, is the fact, that all the ablest ministers and generals of Nicholas, whose talents and experience assisted him so long and so effectually in the work of government, conquest, and foreign diplomacy, are now either dead, or are superannuated.

The most distinguished statesman of the Russian court who still survives, is Nesselrode. He was the son of German parents, though subjects of Russia; and was born off the coast of Portugal, on board a British ship. He was at first a sailor then a soldier, then a diplomatic *attaché* at Paris, and finally minister of foreign affairs. He was the ablest statesman of Europe, and more than a match for Metternich or Talleyrand. It is said that he is opposed to the present war; though court intrigues have at length overborne his wise influence and counsels.

Paskiewitz, prince of Warsaw, enjoys an indisputable military reputation; but he, also, is now so aged, and enfeebled by wounds and long service, as to be incapable of advancing the interests of his master, in any essential degree. His chief renown rests upon his campaign in Persia, in the conduct of which he displayed extraordinary military talents. During the last war between Russia and Poland, he contributed greatly

to the triumph of the Russian arms. He was subsequently appointed governor of Poland, and in this capacity won the applause of Europe, by moderating, as far as he could, the cruel and inhuman severities of his master toward the vanquished patriots of Sarmatia. He is the only person in the Rnssian empire who is decorated with the highest order of the *Tchin*. At the commencement of the present war with Turkey, Paskiewitz was invested with the supreme command of the Russian armies in the principalities; but broken by age, severe wounds, and the various vicissitudes of a long military and political career, he has asked, and at length obtained, permission to retire from the service.

The most remarkable opponent with whom Nicholas, and the present Czar, have had to contend, in accomplishing their vast projects of conquest, is *Schamyl*, the spiritual and temporal lord of the eastern Caucasus. This great warrior and statesman was born 1797, in an obscure village of Himry. He was remarkable in his youth for his intelligence, pride, and love of solitude. He is a handsome man, of great talents, indefatigable energy and iron will. He is also a devout Mussulman, and believes that all his thoughts and purposes are directly inspired by Allah. He had three wives in 1844. His favorite is an Armenian of matchless beauty, who is termed "the Pearl of the Harem." Like Mahomet himself, he has sufficient appreciation of the charms of female loveliness, to

be frequently allured by them from the severe cares of war and state, to the gentler dalliance of love.

The most singular stories are seriously told and believed, respecting the prowess and mysterious adventures of this man. One of these is, that Schamyl once was slain in battle, and came to life again. But while we discard all that is absurd in his reputed history, we may well wonder at that which is real and authentic. Since 1837 he has defeated the invading Russians in many great battles, in which he displayed immense talent, heroism, and military resources. Not the least of his virtues, is the amazing elasticity of purpose, and determination of will, which he exhibits when reduced to the lowest ebb of misfortune and defeat. Phœnix like, he rises from the ruins of his hopes and toils, to soar again on prouder and more ambitious wing than ever before. He fights to defend his country from the unjust encroachments of Russia; and being both high priest and sovereign, he exercises a stupendous and mysterious influence over the minds of his subjects. May he long live to resist, with ultimate success, the encroachments of the most unprincipled and infamous despotism, which now afflicts and disgraces the world!

APPENDIX.

No. I.

Manifesto of the Empress Catherine II., giving an account of her motives for taking the reins of government into her hands.

By the grace of God, We, Catherine II., empress and sovereign of all the Russias, make known these presents to all our loving subjects, ecclesiastical, military, and civil.

Our accession to the imperial throne of all the Russias, is a manifest proof of this truth, that when sincere hearts endeavour for good, the hand of God directs them. We never had either design or desire to arrive at empire, through the means by which it hath pleased the Almighty, according to the inscrutable views of his providence, to place us upon the throne of Russia, our dear country.

On the death of our most august and dear aunt, the Empress Elizabeth Petrovna, of glorious memory, all true patriots (now our most faithful subjects), groaning for the loss of so tender a mother, placed their only consolation in obeying her nephew, whom she had named for her successor, that they might show thereby, in some degree, their acknowledgments to their deceased sovereign. And although they soon found out the weakness of his mind, unfit to rule so vast an empire, they imagined he would have known his own insufficiency. Whereupon they sought our maternal assistance in the affairs of government.

But when absolute power falls to the lot of a monarch, who has not sufficient virtue and humanity to place just bounds to it, it degenerates into a fruitful source of the most pernicious evils. This is the sum, in short, of what our native country has suffered. She struggled to be delivered from a sovereign, who, being blindly given up to the most dangerous passions, thought of nothing but indulging them, without employing himself in the welfare of the empire committed to his care.

During the time of his being Grand Duke, and heir to the throne of Russia, he often caused the most bitter griefs to his most august aunt and sovereign (the truth of which is known to all our court), however he might behave himself outwardly; being kept under her eye by her tenderness, he looked upon this mark of affection as an insupportable yoke. He could not, however, disguise himself so well, but it was perceived by all our faithful subjects, that he was possessed of the most audacious ingratitude, which he sometimes showed by personal contempt, sometimes by an avowed hatred to the nation. At length, throwing aside his cloak of hypocrisy, he thought it more fit to let loose the bridle of his passions, than conduct himself as the heir of so great an empire. In a word, the least traces of honour were not to be perceived in him. What were the consequences of all this?

He was scarcely assured that the death of his aunt and benefactress approached, but he banished her memory entirely from his mind; nay, even before she had sent forth her last groan. He only cast an eye of contempt on the corpse exposed on the bier; and as the ceremony at that time required, obliged him to approach it, he did it with his eyes manifestly replete with joy; even intimating his ingratitude by his words. We might add, that the obsequies would have been nothing equal to the dignity of so great and magnanimous a sovereign, if our tender respect to her,

cemented by the ties of blood, and the extreme affection between us, had not made us take that duty upon us.

He imagined that it was not to the Supreme Being, but only to chance, that he was indebted for absolute power; and that he had it in his hands, not for the good of his subjects, but solely for his own satisfaction. Adding, therefore, license to absolute power, he made all the changes in the state which the weakness of his mind could suggest, to the oppression of the people.

Having effaced from his heart even the least traces of the holy orthodox religion (though he had been sufficiently taught the principles thereof), he began first by rooting out this true religion, established so long in Russia, by absenting himself from the house of God, and of prayers, in so open a manner, that some of his subjects, excited by conscience and honesty, seeing his irreverence and contempt of the rites of the church, or rather the railleries he made of them, and scandalizing them by his behaviour, dared to make remonstrances to him concerning it; who, for so doing, scarcely escaped the resentment which they might have expected from so capricious a sovereign, whose power was not limited by any human laws. He even intended to destroy the churches, and ordered some to be pulled down. He prohibited those to have chapels in their own houses, whose infirmities hindered them from visiting the house of God. Thus he would have domineered over the faithful, in endeavouring to stifle in them the fear of God, which the holy scripture teaches us to be the beginning of wisdom.

From this want of zeal towards God, and contempt of his laws, resulted that scorn to the civil and natural laws of his kingdom; for having but an only son, which God had given us, the grand duke Paul Petrovitch, he would not, when he ascended the throne of Russia, declare him for his successor; that being reserved for

his caprice, which tended to the detriment of us and of our son, having an inclination to overthrow the right that his aunt had vested in him, and to make the government of our native country pass into the hands of strangers; in opposition to that maxim of natural right, according to which nobody can transmit to another more than he has received himself.

Although with great grief we saw this intention, we did not believe that we ourselves, and our most dear son, should have been exposed to a persecution so severe; but all persons of probity having observed that the measures that he pursued, by their effects, manifested that they had a natural tendency to our ruin, and that of our dear successor, their generous and pious hearts were justly alarmed; animated with zeal for the interest of their native country, and astonished at our patience under these heavy persecutions, they secretly informed us that our life was in danger, in order to engage us to undertake the burden of governing so large an empire.

While the whole nation were on the point of testifying their disapprobation of his measures, he nevertheless continued to grieve them the more, by subverting all those excellent arrangements established by Peter the Great, our most dear predecessor, of glorious memory, which that true father of his country accomplished by indefatigable pains and labour, through the whole course of a reign of thirty years. The late Peter the Third despised the laws of the empire, and her most respectable tribunals, to such a degree, that he could not even bear to hear them mentioned.

After one bloody war, he rashly entered upon another, in which the interests of Russia were no way concerned. He entertained an insuperable aversion to the regiments of guards, which had faithfully served his illustrious ancestors, and made innovations in the army, which, far from exciting in their breasts noble sen-

timents of valour, only served to discourage troops always ready to spill their best blood in the cause of their country. He changed entirely the face of the army; nay, it even seemed that, by dividing their habits into so many uniforms, and giving them so many different embellishments, for the most part fantastical to the greatest degree, he intended to infuse into them a suspicion, that they did not, in effect, belong to one master, and thereby provoke the soldiers, in the heat of battle, to slay one another; although experience demonstrated, that uniformity in dress had not a little contributed towards unanimity.

Inconsiderately and incessantly bent on pernicious regulations, he so alienated the hearts of his subjects, that there was scarcely a single person to be found in the nation, who did not openly express his disapprobation, and was even desirous to take away his life; but the laws of God, which command sovereign princes to be respected, being deeply engraved on the hearts of our faithful subjects, restrained them, and engaged them to wait with patience, till the hand of God struck the important blow, and by his fall delivered an oppressed people. Under those circumstances, now laid before the impartial eyes of the public, it was, in fact, impossible but our soul should be troubled with those impending woes which threatened our country, and with that persecution which we, and our most dear son, the heir of the Russian throne, unjustly suffered; being almost entirely excluded from the imperial palace; in such sort, that all who had regard for us, or rather those who had courage enough to speak it (for we have not been able to find that there is one person who is not devoted to our interest), by expressing their sentiments of respect due to us, as their empress, endangered their life, or at least their fortune. In fine, the endeavours he made to ruin us, rose to such a pitch, that they broke out in public; and then charging us with being the cause

of the murmurs, which his own imprudent measures occasioned, his resolution to take away our life openly appeared. But being informed of his purpose by some of our trusty subjects, who were determined to deliver their country, or perish in the attempt, relying on the aid of the Almighty, we cheerfully exposed our person to danger, with all that magnanimity, which our native country had a right to expect in return for her affection to us. After having invoked the Most High, and reposed our hope in the divine favour, we resolved also either to sacrifice our life for our country, or save it from bloodshed and calamity. Scarcely had we taken this resolution, by the direction of favouring heaven, and declared our assent to the deputies of the empire, than the orders of the state crowded to give us assurances of their fidelity and submission.

It now remained for us, in pursuance of the love we bore our faithful subjects, to prevent the consequences which we apprehended, in case of the late Emperor's inconsiderately placing his confidence in the imaginary power of the Holstein troops (for whose sake he stayed at Oranienbaum, living in indolence, and abandoning the most pressing exigencies of the state), and there occasioning a carnage, to which our guards and other regiments were ready to expose themselves, for the sake of their native country, for ours, and that of our successor. For these reasons we looked upon it as a necessary duty towards our subjects (to which we are immediately called by the voice of God), to prevent so great a misfortune, by prompt and proper measures. Therefore, placing ourselves at the head of the body-guards, regiments of artillery, and other troops in and about the imperial residence, we undertook to disconcert an iniquitous design, of which we were as yet only informed in part.

But scarcely were we got out of the city, before we received two

letters from the late Emperor, one quick on the heels of the other. The first by our Vice-Chancellor, the Prince Gallitzin, entreating us to allow him to return to Holstein, his native dominions; the other by Major-General Michael Ismailof, by which he declared, that of his own proper motion, he renounced the crown and throne of Russia. In this last, he begged of us to allow him to withdraw to Holstein, with Elizabeth Vorontzof and Gudovitch. These two last letters, stuffed with flattering expressions, came to our hands a few hours after he had given orders for putting us to death, as we have been since informed, from the very persons who were appointed to execute those unnatural orders.

In the mean time, he had still resources left him, which were to arm against us his Holstein troops, and some small detachments then about his person; he had also in his power several personages of distinction belonging to our court; as he might, therefore, have compelled us to agree to terms of accommodation still more hurtful to our country (for after having learned what great commotions there were among the people, he had detained them as hostages at his palace of Oranienbaum, and our humanity would never have consented to their destruction; but, to save their lives, we would have risked a part of those dangers revived by an accommodation), several persons of high rank about our person requested us to send him a billet in return, proposing to him, if his intentions were such as he declared them to be, that he should instantly send us a voluntary and formal renunciation of the throne, wrote by his own hand for the public satisfaction. Major-General Ismailof carried this proposal, and the writing he now sent back was as follows:

"During the short space of my absolute reign over the empire of Russia, I became sensible that I was not able to support so great a burden, and that my abilities were not equal to the task

of governing so great an empire, either as a sovereign, or in any other capacity whatever. I also foresaw the great troubles which must have thence arisen, and have been followed with the total ruin of the empire, and covered me with eternal disgrace. After having, therefore, seriously reflected thereon, I declare, without constraint, and in the most solemn manner, to the Russian empire, and to the whole universe, that I for ever renounce the government of the said empire, never desiring hereafter to reign therein, either as an absolute sovereign, or under any other form of government; never wishing to aspire thereto, or to use any means, of any sort, for that purpose. As a pledge of which, I swear sincerely, before God and all the world, to this present renunciation, written and signed this 29th of June, 1762, O. S.

"PETER."

It is thus, without spilling one drop of blood, that we have ascended the Russian throne, by the assistance of God, and the approving suffrages of our dear country. Humbly adoring the decrees of Divine Providence, we assure our faithful subjects, that we will not fail, by night and by day, to invoke the Most High to bless our sceptre, and enable us to wield it for the maintenance of our orthodox religion, the security and defence of our dear native country, and the support of justice; as well as to put an end to all miseries, iniquities, and violences, by strengthening and fortifying our heart for the public good. And as we ardently wish to prove effectually how far we merit the reciprocal love of our people, for whose happiness we acknowledge our throne to be appointed, we solemnly promise, on our imperial word, to make such arrangements in the empire, that the government may be endued with an intrinsic force to support itself within limited and proper bounds; and each department of the state provided with wholesome laws and regulations, sufficient to maintain good order therein at all times, and under all circumstances.

By which means we hope to establish hereafter the empire and our sovereign power (however they may have been formerly weakened) in such a manner as to comfort the discouraged hearts of all true patriots. We do not in the least doubt but that our loving subjects will, as well for the salvation of their own souls, as for the good of religion, inviolably observe the oath which they have sworn to us in the presence of the Almighty God; we thereupon assure them of our imperial favour.

Done at St. Petersburg, July 6, 1762

No. II.

Declaration published by the Empress Catherine II., upon recalling Count Bestuchef Riumin from his banishment in Siberia.

The most ordinary understanding cannot be ignorant of the intimate obligation which all mankind contract towards God and towards each other, to transgress on no occasion whatever the demands of justice, and especially not to heap misfortunes and oppression on the head of the innocent.

Ere we mounted our imperial throne of Russia, we were well acquainted with the long and signal services rendered to this empire by the unfortunate, but irreproachable Count Bestuchef Riumin. Her public decrees of the 27th of February, 1758, induced us to presume, that the crime which had drawn upon him so severe an animadversion on the part of our dear aunt, the Empress Elizabeth, must have been very heinous; but the second manifesto, of the 6th of April, 1759, which contained a vague detail of the crimes attributed to him, and whereof none were specified, obliged us to suspend our judgment, and led us to suspect, that the indig-

nation of that humane sovereign, and the vengeance to which she had been brought, were no more than the effects of calumny and intrigue; for the contents of this second manifesto related not to a malefactor, but to an oppressed man condemned beforehand.

From our natural humanity we have thought fit to soften the severity of the sentence, to pardon the guilty, rather than to leave in oblivion the services which the said Count Bestuchef rendered during so many years to our empire, and to let him (which would have been still more blamable) terminate his days in an ignominious exile.

As soon, therefore, as Providence placed the sceptre in our hands, submissive to the emotions of our sensibility, and to the voice of justice, we have recalled from his exile that old and faithful servant of our empire; but, not ignorant of our readiness to hearken to the dictates of justice, he, presenting himself before us, has humbly implored the permission to make his innocence appear to our eyes, a permission which we granted him with all our heart and, after having specified the intrigues and the calumnies, which appeared to us authenticated, and clearer than light, he excited in our heart the most lively compassion. We experienced at the same time a tender satisfaction, on perceiving that the liberty to which we restored him, was in perfect agreement with that love of order and justice, by which we commenced our reign.

His example has convinced us, that the more weighty the accusation, the more severe ought the examination to be, as without this precaution, sentence of condemnation may fall upon an innocent person. Granting that our very dear aunt, the Empress Elizabeth, had, to our knowledge, and to that of the whole world, great intelligence and sagacity; nevertheless, as no one is infallible ..... the affair of Count Bestuchef took a turn highly disadvantageous to the honour of our dear aunt .....

For these reasons, desirous of restoring the lustre of her name, and the virtues which guided her reign, and to prove how much we cherish her memory, and to fulfil with exactitude the duty of every Christian, as becomes a mother of the country, we have thought ourselves obliged to declare solemnly, that the said Count Bestuchef of Riumin was deserving, in the highest degree, of the confidence of our deceased aunt, &c. .....

Given at St. Petersburg, this 13th of August, 1762.

No. III.

Translation of a letter from the Empress of Russia, to M. d'Alembert, at Paris, whom she had invited into Russia to educate her son.

M. D'Alembert,

I have just received the answer you wrote to Mr. Odart, in which you refuse to transplant yourself, to assist in the education of my son. I easily conceive that it costs a philosopher, like you, nothing to despise what the world calls grandeur and honour: these, in your eyes, are very little; and I can readily agree with you that they are so. Considering things in this light, there would be nothing great in the behaviour of Queen Christina [of Sweden], which has been so highly extolled; and often censured with more justice. But to be born and called to contribute to the happiness, and even the instruction, of a whole nation, and yet decline it, is, in my opinion, refusing to do that good which you wish to do. Your philosophy is founded in a love to mankind: permit me then to tell you, that to refuse to serve mankind, whilst it is in your

power, is to miss your aim. I know you too well to be a good man, to ascribe your refusal to vanity. I know that the sole motive of it is, the love of ease, and leisure to cultivate letters, and the friendship of those you esteem. But what is there in this objection? Come, with all your friends; I promise both them and you, every conveniency and advantage that depends upon me; and perhaps you will find more liberty and ease here, than in your native country. You refused the invitation of the King of Prussia, notwithstanding your obligations to him; but that prince has no son. I own to you, that I have the education of my son so much at heart, and I think you so necessary to it, that perhaps I press you with too much earnestness. Excuse my indiscretion for the sake of the occasion of it: and be assured that it is my esteem for you that makes me so urgent. CATHERINE.

Moscow, Nov. 13, 1762.

In this whole letter I have argued only from what I have found in your writings; you would not contradict yourself.

No. IV.

A letter from M. De Voltaire, to the Russian ambassador at Paris.

I SEE by the letters which her Imperial Majesty and your Excellency honour me with, how greatly your nation is rising, while I am afraid that, in some respects, ours is beginning to degenerate. The Empress deigns, herself, to translate that chapter of Belisarius, which some college-fellows traduce at Paris. We should be overwhelmed with shame and scorn, if all the men of worth, of whom there is a great number in France, did not strongly stand

up against the egregious scandal of the times. Folly, ignorance, and envy, there will always be in any country; but then there will also be in it science and good taste. I dare even aver to you that, in general, our principal military, and, as to what concerns the counsel, our counsellors of state, and the masters of requests, are more enlightened than they were in the shining age of Louis the Fourteenth. Great talents are still rare; but science and reason are more common than then.

I see with pleasure that there is forming in Europe an immense republic of cultivated understandings. The light diffuses and communicates itself on all sides. I have things come to me from the north that astonish me. Within these last fifteen years there has been operated a revolution in the human understanding that will form a great epoch. The outcries of the pedants proclaim the approach of this great change, as the croaking of the crows forebodes fair weather.

I know nothing of the book of M. de la Riviere, which you do me the honour of mentioning to me; but can hardly believe that the author, while avoiding the faults into which M. de Montesquieu may have fallen, has gone beyond him in those points in which that shining genius is in the right. I shall send for his book; and in the mean while congratulate the author on his being so near such a sovereign and empress, who patronizes all the talents in foreigners, and whose maternal care gives birth to them in her own dominions. But it is you whom I especially congratulate, on representing her so worthily at Paris.

I have the honour to be, etc.

No. V.

Extract of a letter from Catherine II. to M. De Voltaire.

Sir,

The brightness of the northern star is a mere aurora borealis. It is nothing more than giving to a neighbor something of our own superfluity. But to be the advocate of human kind, the defender of oppressed innocence; by this you will be indeed immortalized. The two causes of Calas and Sirven have procured you the veneration due to such miracles. You have combated the united enemies of mankind, superstition, fanaticism, ignorance, chicane, bad judges, and the power lodged in them, all together. To surmount such obstacles required both talents and virtue. You have shown the world that you possess both. You have carried your point. You desire, sir, some relief for the Sirven family. Can I possibly refuse it? Or, should you praise me for the action, would there be the least foundation for it? I own to you, that I should be much better pleased if my bill of exchange could pass unknown. Nevertheless, if you think my name, unharmonious as it is, may be of any service to those victims of the spirit of persecution, I leave it to your discretion; and you may announce me, provided it be no way prejudicial to the parties.

Catherine.

No. VI.

The manifesto concerning the rebellion of Pugatschef.

By the grace of God, we Catherine II., Empress and Autocratrix of all the Russias, etc., make known to all our faithful subjects,

that we have learnt, with the utmost indignation and extreme affliction, that a certain Cossack, a deserter and fugitive from the Don, named Ikhelman Pugatschef, after having traversed Poland, has been collecting, for some time past, in the districts that border on the river Irghis, in the government of Orenburg, a troop of vagabonds like himself; that he continues to commit in those parts all kinds of excesses, by inhumanly depriving the inhabitants of their possessions, and even of their lives; and that in order to draw over to his party, hitherto composed of robbers, such persons as he meets, and especially the unhappy patriots, on whose credulity he imposes, he has had the insolence to arrogate to himself the name of the late Emperor Peter III. It would be superfluous here to prove the absurdity of such an imposture, which cannot even put on a shadow of probability in the eyes of sensible persons: for, thanks to the divine goodness, those ages are past in which the Russian empire was plunged in ignorance and barbarism; when a Griska, an Outreper, with their adherents, and several other traitors to their country, made use of impostures as gross and detestable, to arm brother against brother, and citizen against citizen.

Since those eras, which it is grievous to recollect, all true patriots have enjoyed the fruits of public tranquillity, and shudder with horror at the very remembrance of former troubles. In a word, there is not a man deserving of the Russian name who does not hold in abomination the odious and insolent lie by which Pugatschef fancies himself able to seduce and to deceive persons of a simple and credulous disposition, by promising to free them from the bonds of submission, and obedience to their sovereign, as if the Creator of the Universe had established human societies in such a manner as that they can subsist without an intermediate authority between the sovereign and the people.

Nevertheless, as the insolence of this vile refuse of the human race is attended with consequences pernicious to the provinces adjacent to that district; as the report of the flagrant enormities which he has committed may affright those persons who are accustomed to imagine the misfortunes of others as ready to fall upon them, and as we watch with indefatigable care over the tranquillity of our faithful subjects, we inform them by the present manifesto that we have taken, without delay, such measures as are the best adapted to stifle the sedition.

No. VII.

Manifesto of the Empress of all the Russias, relative to the partition of Poland.

I, Michael Krechetnikof, general in chief, senator, genera. governor of Tula, Kaluga, and the countries newly annexed from the Polish republic to the Russian empire, commander of all the armies there, etc., hereby make known, by the supreme will and command of my most gracious sovereign, her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, to all the inhabitants, in general, of the countries now united for ever to the Russian empire, from the Polish republic:

Her Imperial Majesty has hitherto taken in the affairs of Poland a part that has always been tending to the interest of both empires. It has not only been unsuccessful, but proved a fruitless burden; and her endeavours to maintain peace and freedom among her neighbours have been attended with innumerable losses.

Thirty years of experience has evinced it, in the numerous internal disputes which have distracted the Polish republic. Her

Imperial Majesty has viewed their sufferings, in the countries and cities bordering on her empire, with great compassion, considering them as descended from the same race, and professing the holy Christian religion.

Even at this moment, some unworthy Poles, enemies to their country, have not been ashamed to approve the government of the ungodly rebels, in the kingdom of France, and to request their assistance to involve their country also in bloody civil wars.

The true Christian religion, and the well-being of the inhabitants of the above-mentioned countries, would suffer from the introduction of such detestable doctrines, which tend to annihilate all the bonds of society, to overthrow all safety, property, and prosperity. These enemies of peace, following the detestable plan of the mob of rebels in France, propagate their doctrines throughout Poland to the utmost of their power, which would destroy for ever their own and their neighbours' happiness.

From these considerations, her Imperial Majesty, my most gracious mistress, as well to indemnify herself for her many losses, as for the future safety of her empire, and the Polish dominions, and for the cutting off, at once, for ever, all future disturbances, and frequent changes of government, has been pleased now to take under her sway, and to unite for ever to her empire, the following tracts of land, with all their inhabitants: namely, a line beginning at the village of Druy, on the left bank of the river Dvina, at the corner of the border of Semigallia; thence extending to Neroch and Dubrova, and following the border of the vivodeship of Vilna, to Stolptsa, to Nesvij, and then to Pinsk; and thence passing Kunish, between Viskero and Novegreble, near the frontier of Gallicia; thence to the river Dniester; and, lastly, running along the river, till it enters the old border of Russia and Poland, at Yergetic: in such manner, that all the cities and countries within

this line of demarcation, the new border of Russia and Poland, shall henceforward, for ever, come under the sceptre of the Russian empire, and the inhabitants, of all ranks whatever, be subjects thereof.

I, being appointed by her Imperial Majesty governor-general of these countries, by her supreme order have to certify, in her sacred name, and in her own words, to all her Imperial Majesty's new subjects, and now my beloved countrymen, that her most gracious Majesty is pleased, not only to confirm and insure to all the free and public exercise of their religion, and full security of property and possession, but to unite and to assimilate them under her government, for the fame and glory of the whole Russian empire: an example of which is to be seen in her faithful subjects, the inhabitants of White Russia, now living in full peace and plenty under her wise and gracious dominion. Further, that all and every one of them shall enjoy all the rights and privileges of her old subjects; and that from this day, every denomination of the inhabitants enters on the full participation of these benefits through the whole extent of the Russian empire.

Her Imperial Majesty expects, from the gratitude of her new subjects, that they, being placed by her bounty on an equality with Russians, shall in return transfer the love of their former country to the new one, and live, in future, attached to so great and generous an empress.

I, therefore, now inform every person, from the highest to the lowest, that, within one month, they must take the oath of allegiance before the witnesses whom I shall appoint; and if any of the gentlemen, or other ranks, possessing real or immovable property, regardless of their own interest, should refuse to take the oath prescribed, three months are allowed for the sale of their immovables, and their free departure over the borders; after the

expiration of which term, all their remaining property shall be confiscated to the crown.

The clergy, both high and low, as pastors of their flocks, are expected to set the example in taking the oath; and in the daily service in their churches they must pray for her Imperial Majesty, for her successor, the great duke, Paul Petrovitch, and for all the imperial family, according to the form which shall be given them.

In the above-mentioned solemn assurance concerning the free exercise of religion and undisturbed possession of property, it is understood that the Jews living in these countries united to the Russian empire shall remain on the former footing, protected in their religion and property; for her Majesty's humanity will not permit them alone to be excluded from the benefits of her kindness, under the protection of God; so long as they continue to live in peace and pursue their trades like faithful subjects, law and justice shall be administered, in the name of her Imperial Majesty, in the proper places, with the utmost strictness and equity.

I have further thought it needful to add, by order of her Imperial Majesty, that the troops shall, as in their own country, be under the strictest discipline. Their taking possession, therefore, of the various places, and changing the government, should not in the least alter the course of trade or living; for the increase of the happiness of the inhabitants, in all parts, is the intention of her Imperial Majesty.

This manifesto shall be read in all the churches, on the 27th of this present month of March, registered in all the municipal books, and nailed up in proper places, for the general information; and that full credit may be given to it, I have, in consequence of the powers intrusted to me, signed it with my hand, and affixed to it the seal of my arms, at the head-quarters of the army under my command, at Polonna.

(Signed) M. Krechetnikof.

No. VIII.

Manifesto published by the Court of St. Petersburg on occasion of the assassination of Prince Ivan.

By the grace of God, we Catherine the Second, Empress and sovereign of all the Russias, etc., to all whom these presents may concern.

When, by the divine will, and in compliance with the ardent and unanimous desires of our faithful subjects, we ascended the throne of Russia, we were not ignorant that Ivan, son of Anthony, Prince of Brunswick-Wolfenbuttle, and the Princess Anne of Mecklenburgh, was still alive. This prince, as is well known, was, immediately after his birth, unlawfully declared heir to the imperial crown of Russia; but, by the decrees of Providence, he was soon after irrevocably excluded from that high dignity, and the sceptre placed in the hands of the lawful heiress, Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great, our beloved aunt of glorious memory. After we had ascended the throne, and offered up to heaven our just thanksgivings, the first object that employed our thoughts, in consequence of that humanity that is natural to us, was the unhappy situation of that prince, who was dethroned by the Divine Providence, and had been unfortunate ever since his birth; and we formed the resolution of alleviating his misfortunes, as far as was possible. We immediately made a visit to him, in order to judge of his understanding and talents, and, in consequence thereof, to procure him an agreeable and quiet situation, suitable to his character and the education he had received. But how great was our surprise, when, besides a defect in his utterance, that was uneasy to himself, and rendered his discourse almost unintelligible to others, we observed in him a total privation of

sense and reason! Those who accompanied us during this interview saw how much our heart suffered at the view of an object so fitted to excite compassion; they were also convinced that the only measure we could take to succour the unfortunate prince was to leave him where we found him, and to procure him all the comforts and conveniences that his situation would admit of. We accordingly gave our orders for this purpose, though the state he was in prevented his perceiving the marks of our humanity, or being sensible of our attention and care; for he knew nobody, could not distinguish between good and evil, nor did he know the use that might be made of reading, to pass the time with less weariness and disgust: on the contrary, he sought after pleasure in objects that discovered, with sufficient evidence, the disorder of his imagination.

To prevent, therefore, ill-intentioned persons from giving him any trouble, or from making use of his name or orders to disturb the public tranquillity, we gave him a guard, and placed about his person two officers of the garrison, in whose fidelity and integrity we could confide. These officers were Captain Vlassief and Lieutenant Tschekin, who, by their long military services, which had considerably impaired their health, deserved a suitable recompense, and a station in which they might pass quietly the rest of their days; they were accordingly charged with the care of the prince, and were strictly enjoined to let none approach him. Yet all these precautions were not sufficient to prevent an abandoned profligate from committing at Schlusselburg, with unparalleled wickedness, and at the risk of his own life, an outrage, whose enormity inspires horror. A second lieutenant of the regiment of Smolensko, a native of the Ukraine, named Basil Mirovitch, grandson of the first rebel that followed Mazeppa, and a man in whom the perjury of his ancestors seems to have been infused

with their blood; this profligate, having passed his days in debauchery and dissipation, and being thus deprived of all honourable means of advancing his fortune; having also lost sight of what he owed to the law of God, and of the oath of allegiance he had taken to us; and knowing Prince Ivan only by name, without any knowledge either of his bodily or mental qualities; took it into his head to make use of this prince to advance his fortune at all events, without being restrained by the consideration of the bloody scene that such an attempt was adapted to occasion. In order to execute this detestable, dangerous, and desperate project, he desired, during our absence in Livonia, to be upon guard, out of his turn, in the fortress of Schlusselburg, where the guard is relieved every eight days; and the 15th of last month, about two o'clock in the morning, he all of a sudden called up the main guard, formed it into a line, and ordered the soldiers to load with ball. Berednikof, governor of the fortress, having heard a noise, came out of his apartment, and asked Mirovitch the reason of this disturbance, but received no other answer from this rebel than a blow on the head with the butt-end of his musket. Mirovitch, having wounded and arrested the governor, led on his troops with fury, and attacked with fire-arms the handful of soldiers that guarded Prince Ivan. But he was so warmly received by those soldiers under the command of the two officers mentioned above, that he was obliged to retire. By a particular direction of that Providence that watches over the life of man, there was that night a thick mist, which, together with the inward form and situation of the fortress, had this happy effect, that not one individual was either killed or wounded. The bad success of this first attempt could not engage this enemy of the public peace to desist from his rebellious purpose. Driven on by rage and despair, he ordered a piece of cannon to be brought from one of the bastions, which order was im-

mediately executed. Captain Vlassief and his lieutenant Tschekin, seeing that it was impossible to resist such a superior force, and considering the unhappy consequences that must ensue from the deliverance of a person that was committed to their care, and the effusion of innocent blood that must follow from the tumults it was adapted to excite, took, after deliberating together, the only step that they thought proper to maintain the public tranquillity, which was to cut short the days of the unfortunate prince. Considering also, that if they set at liberty a prisoner, whom this desperate party endeavoured to force with such violence out of their hands, they ran the risk of being punished according to the rigour of the laws, they assassinated the prince, without being restrained by the apprehension of being put to death by a villain reduced to despair. The monster (Mirovitch), seeing the dead body of the prince, was so confounded and struck at a sight he so little expected, that he acknowledged, that very instant, his temerity and his guilt, and discovered his repentance to the troop which about an hour before he had seduced from their duty, and rendered the accomplices of his crime.

Then it was that the two officers, who had nipped this rebellion in the bud, joined with the governor of the fortress in securing the person of this rebel, and in bringing back the soldiers to their duty. They also sent to our privy counsellor Panin, under whose orders they acted, a relation of this event, which, though unhappy, has nevertheless, under the protection of Heaven, been the occa sion of preventing still greater calamities. This senator dispatched immediately Lieutenant-Colonel Kaschkin, with sufficient instructions to maintain the public tranquillity, to prevent disorder on the spot (*i. e.*, where the assassination was committed), and sent us, at the same time, a courier, with a circumstantial account of the whole affair. In consequence of this, we ordered Lieutenant

General Veymarn, of the division of St. Petersburg, to take the necessary informations upon the spot; this he has done, and has sent us accordingly the interrogatories, depositions, and the confession of the villain himself, who has acknowledged his guilt.

Sensible of the enormity of his crime, and of its consequences with regard to the peace of our country, we have referred the whole affair to the consideration of our senate, which we have ordered, jointly with the synod, to invite the three first classes, and the presidents of all the colleges, to hear the verbal relation of General Veymarn, who has taken the proper informations; to pronounce sentence in consequence thereof; and, after that sentence has been signed, to present it to us for our confirmation of the same.

The original is signed by her Imperial Majesty's own hand.

CATHERINE.

No. IX.

Letter of Frederick the Great to Catherine II.

MADAM, MY SISTER,

I must begin by thanking your Imperial Majesty for the favour you have conferred upon me in the communication of your work on legislation. Permit me to say, that it is a business which has had but few examples in the world; and I may venture to add, madam, that your Imperial Majesty is the first empress who has made such a present as that which I have just now received. The ancient Greeks, who were all appreciators of merit, in their deifications of great men, assigned the first place to legislators, whom

they deemed the true benefactors of the human race. They would have placed your Imperial Majesty between Lycurgus and Solon.

I made it my first duty, madam, to read the excellent work which your majesty has vouchsafed to compose; and, that I might keep my mind free from all prepossession, I considered it as coming from a well-known pen. I confess to you, madam, that I was charmed, not only with the principle of humanity and gentleness that gives birth to these laws, but also with the order, with the association of ideas, with the uncommon clearness and precision that reign in this work, and the immense variety of knowledge disseminated throughout.

I put myself, madam, in your place, and I immediately perceived that every country demands particular considerations, which require the legislator to comply with the genius of the nation, in the same manner as the gardener accommodates himself to his soil. There are designs which your Imperial Majesty is satisfied with pointing out, and on which your prudence prevents you from insisting. In a word, madam, though I am not thoroughly acquainted with the genius of the people whom you govern with so much glory, I see enough of it to persuade me that if they govern themselves by your laws, they will be the happiest nation in the world; and since your Imperial Majesty is desirous of knowing all that I think on that matter, I deem it a duty incumbent on me to tell it naturally.

It is, madam, that good laws, formed on the principles that you have traced out, will require lawyers for their being put in execution in your vast domains; and I think, madam, that, after the good you have just been doing in legislation, you have another boon to grant, which is, the institution of an academy of law, for the education of persons designed for the bar, as well judges

as advocates. However simple the several laws may be, cases of litigation, cases complicated and obscure, will arise, in which it will be necessary to draw up truth from the well, which require expert advocates and judges to unravel them.

This, on my honour, is all that I have to say to your Imperial Majesty, unless it be, madam, that this estimable monument of your labor and your activity, with which you condescend to trust me, shall be preserved as one of the choicest pieces in my library. Were there anything, madam, capable of augmenting my admiration, it would be the benefit you have herein bestowed upon your immense people.

Accept, with your accustomed goodness, the assurances of the high consideration with which I am,

Madam, my sister,

Your Imperial Majesty's good brother and ally,

(Signed) FREDERIC.

No. X.

A Catalogue of Catherine's presents to her favourites.

	Rubles.
The five brothers Orlof received 45,000 peasants; in lands, palaces, jewels, plate, and money	17,000,000
Vissensky, officer of the guards, about two months in favour	300,000
Vassiltchikoff, simple lieutenant of the guards, received in the twenty-two months that he was in favour as follows:	

	Rubles.
An estate with 7000 peasants upon it, estimated at	600,000
In money	100,000
In jewels	60,000
In plate	50,000
A palace furnished	100,000
A pension of 20,000 rubles per annum, nearly	200,000
Total,	1,100,000

The order of St. Alexander Nefsky.

Prince Potempkin received, in the two first years, about nine millions.

He afterwards accumulated immense riches. He had great estates in Poland, and in all the provinces of Russia. One of his book-cases was full of gold, diamonds, and notes of the banks of London, Amsterdam, and Venice. His fortune was estimated at 50,000,000

Zavadosky received, in eighteen months, lands in Poland with 2000 peasants, in the Ukraine with 6000, and in Russia with 1800. These estates were estimated at 1,000,000

He received in money	150,000
In plate	50,000
In jewels	80,000
In a pension on the cabinet, of 10,000 rubles a year,	100,000
Total,	1,380,000

The ribbon of the white eagle of Poland.

	Rubles.
Zoritch received in one year, the ribbon of the order of the sword of Sweden, and that of the white eagle of Poland.	
An estate in Poland, of . . .	500,000
One in Livonia, of fifty haaks . . .	100,000
A commandery in Poland, produced 12,000 rubles yearly, valued at	120,000
In money	500,000
In jewels	200,000
Total,	1,420,000
Korsakof received in sixteen months, the ribbon of the white eagle of Poland, the palace of Vassiltchikof, repurchased for him . . .	100,000
An estate with 4000 peasants . . .	400,000
In money and jewels	150,000
The liquidation of his debts	100,000
To fit him out for travelling	100,000
Gratification while on his travels . . .	70,000
Total,	920,000
Lanskoï received in estates or money . .	3,000,000
In diamonds	80,000
To pay his debts	80,000
A palace valued at	100,000
Total,	3,260,000

Moreover, his sister and his cousin were admitted into the number of maids of honour to the Empress, and received many presents not brought into the account.

	Rubles.
Yermolof received in sixteen months, the ribbon of the white eagle of Poland.	
An estate valued at	100,000
Another with 3000 peasants	300,000
In money	150,000
Total,	550,000
Momonof received in twenty-six months, in estates	600,000
In money	200,000
In jewels	80,000
Total,	880,000
Plato Zubof was decorated with the title of prince, and with several ribbons, and appointed Grand-Master of the artillery. He received large estates in Russia, in Poland, and in Courland. His fortune, exclusive of movables and jewels, amounts to about 100,000 per annum, and consequently valued at	2,500,000
His movables and jewels . . .	200,000
Total,	2,700,000
Valerian Zubof received great sums in money, estates in Poland and in Courland, and a pension of 12,000 rubles, payable in gold. The whole may be estimated at	800,000

	Rubles.
To these gifts must be added the expenditure of the favourite, estimated at 1,250,000 rubles per annum, which, during the thirty-four years of the reign of Catherine II., amounts to . .	8,500,000
Sum total,	92,820,000

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